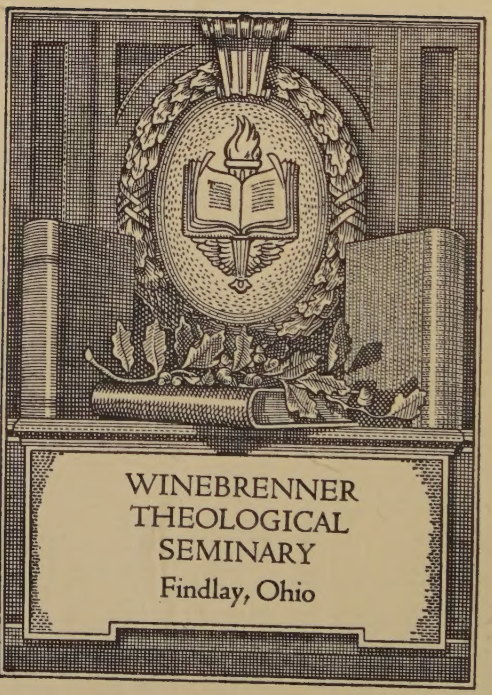
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WILLIAM McKENDREE

A BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY

By E. E. HOSS, D.D.

One of the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

METHODIST FOUNDER ' SERIES

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INTRODUCTION.

An adequate subject and a capable and dedicated pen are the necessary conditions for making a purposeful book, one that in itself has power to live and accomplish the end of its writing. The wide religious fellowship to which the present volume is particularly addressed will, without debate, allow that in it these conditions have been met. Such a presentation as it makes of the apostolic career with which it deals has long been a desideratum in the thought life of the Church. It will not be denied that the biographical studies of the early leadership of Methodism in this country have, until more recent years, been found in writings whose terms, while commendably sympathetic and true to the vitalities involved, are not all that is demanded by both the religious and philosophical inquisitiveness of our times. It is to effect this new setting of old truths and to revive the too plainly waning appreciation of heroic precedents that this volume and others in the series of which it is a unit have been written. A privileged perusal of these pages while they were yet in ante-publication processes has suggested to the writer of this introductory sketch the possibilities with which they are charged.

Without so much as touching upon the question of inspiration—a matter that must remain inviolate in all reverent thinking—the Book of the Acts is properly thought of in connection with the authorship of St. Luke. While it is impossible to imagine what the

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apostolic story had been coming from another hand than his, it is quite allowable and reverent to plus its inspiration with the personality and viewpoint of its author. The viewpoint is, in fact, always an integer of first importance, for it is the channel through which the capabilities and fitness of the biographer's personality find expression. Changed conditions and the emergence of a new historical viewpoint have ripened the conviction that our Methodist biography needs a new and more natural setting. The classics of personal history which we have so long used and revered will continue to have their place in our denominational bibliography; but they must, more and more, fall to the exclusive use of students and specialists and give place in the hands of the general reader to fresher and apter recitals of their narratives.

These conclusions involve the doctrine of the continued activity of individual life. The souls of the worthies of the past not only continue to walk the earth, but their deeds have a continuity of force and vitality which requires anew to be made manifest and anew declared. Doctrines of essential belief and institutions reach the point of fixity both as to fact and as to the forms in which they are expressed. But life has in it no such finality; it is itself a continuous expression of doctrine and institutional truth. In this the life which has entered into history and that which is in the process of living are alike. Biography has this advantage over history, except where history itself is only a species of biography.

The earlier history of American Methodism is easily and naturally divisible into three periods, each period

represented by a name that must survive as long as the Wesleyan movement has a record or a representative on this continent. Asbury, McKendree, and Soule are the trio of mighty names in which close the details of a record as heroic and as potent for destiny as any written in the uninspired annals of the race. It would be a profitless task to determine which of these was the greatest or which accomplished the greatest end in his living. They rather make a unity in the history which they wrought. The story of one cannot be told without reciting material facts in the lives of the other two. Their services covered well the years of a century, but the witness of the first overlaps the witness of the others so as to give a view of the three standing in the same line of vision.

Providence fulfilled itself and fulfilled the ethnic and spiritual needs of life on this continent in the selection of these three men to lead the fortunes of the greatest religious movement which the continent has known. The first, an Englishman, with the religious prejudice of Anglicanism, was a type of one of the dominant elements in early racial America; the second, a Virginian, embodied the acquired instinct of religious freedom and the political aspirations characteristic of the colonists and their offspring; while the third, a New Englander, mingled Puritan predilections with atavistic Norman qualities and represented the best-developed type of later American life. Here was the whole religious and social life of the continent rolled into the three patriarchs of early Methodism; and these, in their turn, were by Providence rolled into

a unity of thought and action reaching through practically a century of time.

The privilege of treating at this day of the deeds of the second of this triad of early American Methodist leadership is one to be coveted for the reason that it furnishes the vantage for a backward and a forward sweep of vision. It will be a pleasure to discover how this volume has improved its opportunity. John Morley has, in his life of Gladstone, written a philosophical history of England in the latter half of the nineteenth century. He could not escape this chance, being true to his subject. The modern bishop of the Church, in sketching the career of his illustrious predecessor, has, in various connections, effectively laid bare the secret vitalities of that body of constitutional and administrative life known as historic Methodism. The value of this service can be better calculated and will be better understood after a generation has tried the contents of this volume.

The aim of the present revival of study in Methodist biography has been not only to certainly find the sources and trace the course of authority in our ecclesiasticism, but more particularly to find the fountains and inspirational causes of that exceptional spiritual life which so long characterized Methodism and effectively to commend it to the generations of to-day.

Personal experience has always been the true expositive force in the history of religion. This force was the characteristic manifestation of early Methodism, which formulated no new doctrine and, at its beginning, contemplated no ecclesiastical departure. It is always to be remembered, too, that Methodism took its con-

fession out of the body of an older symbol; but it is also to be remembered that it mightily interpreted old doctrines and old formulas in the lives and testimony of its adherents. In this it completed both the letter and the spirit of the Reformation of the sixteenth century, which was a correction of doctrine rather than a revival of spiritual life. Justification by faith as a doctrinal formula described the ultimate advance of Luther's teachings, while the witness of the Spirit as a vital experience described the goal of the Wesleyan revival.

The necessity for constantly reverting to this experience as a precedent for all Christian living, and also the possibility of continually expanding it in the hope of uncovering new incentives to seek it and new avenues of approach to it, are additional reasons for these latest essays in Methodist biography. The reader is confidently advised that the author of this new biography of the first native American bishop has not failed to cultivate this possibility.

A new and valid reason for the present writing is the relation of the subject to the past fortunes and future hopes of that branch of Methodism whose habitat is in the lands so industriously cultivated by this first American patriarch; and, indeed, the other two mighty ones referred to are not less legitimately claimed in this relationship. Not only is the earliest spring of historic Methodism traceable to these zones, but here, and under the superintendency of these men, were its earliest victories planned and achieved. The time has come, therefore, to set all these things in the light of a narrative which shall be both unequivocal as

to these claims and also just and discriminating in favor of other relationships in the wider house of Methodism. In a word, this new series of biographies especially seeks to present a catholic story of the days of genesis and heroism, one that shall live on and, while teaching the equities of history, shall minister to its unities in a future of possibilities already at our door. It is not to acquit myself of a service of friendship nor to discharge a conventional office, but rather to speak out of the fullness of appreciation and as the result of critical measurement, that I ascribe to this volume the quality of justness, discrimination, and catholicity in all these matters. I count it a great happiness to have been accorded the privilege of inditing this foreword and of commending this volume to the perusal and study of all our people.

HORACE M. DU BOSE.

ATLANTA, GA., July 20, 1914.

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LIFE OF WILLIAM McKENDREE.

CHAPTER I.

Parentage, Birth, and Early Life.

William McKendree, the first native American bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, was born in King William County, Va., forty miles northeast of the city of Richmond, July 6, 1757. He was the eldest of the eight children of John and Mary McKendree, an intelligent, self-respecting, and God-fearing couple, who belonged to what is sometimes condescendingly called "the middle class of Virginians." If anything at all has been preserved concerning his remoter progenitors, it has wholly escaped my research. The family name, however, shows that they were of Scotch origin, though, as was the case with thousands of others of the same blood, they probably reached America by way of the north of Ireland. These transplanted Scotchmen are a masterful race. Wherever they have gone they have left an indelible mark. What they have contributed to the life and growth of the United States in particular can scarcely be overestimated.

John McKendree does not appear to have been, except in the matter of his moral and religious probity, a very uncommon man. He was one of the undistinguished multitude of faithful souls whose names, though not known in the earth, are written in heaven. By vocation he was a planter, owning his own lands

and a few domestic servants, and making always a comfortable subsistence; but never accumulating any considerable fortune, nor achieving social or political eminence. Bishop Paine describes him as follows: "With strong domestic affections, and without any desire for notoriety, he led a humble, industrious, and religious life." Removing in 1764 to James City County, and again in 1770 to Greenville County, he finally, in 1810, migrated with his youngest son, Dr. James McKendree, and three other of his children to Sumner County, in the then young State of Tennessee. From this last of his earthly homes, which was the free gift of the generous and large-hearted Rev. James Gwin—a good farm of three hundred acres—he passed to his heavenly home on his eighty-eighth birthday, October, 1810.

Mary McKendree, whose maiden name, strangely enough, is not known, was a woman of great strength and gentleness of character. In every respect she was fit to be the mother of her famous son. Becoming an invalid in 1769, she was confined to her room till her death, twenty years later. But even under so great a disability she continued the wise management of her household affairs and looked well to the rearing of her children. The exquisite sweetness of her temper, to which there is abundant testimony, left an impression on their minds which neither time nor change could ever obliterate.

Speaking of the McKendrees in general, Bishop Paine says that one of their most marked characteristics was their strong family love. In the course of years they became widely scattered in Virginia, Ten-

nessee, Alabama, and South Carolina; but they never lost their intense affection for one another. Bishop Asbury in a notable passage in his Journal tells how he and Bishop McKendree once became the guests of the latter's younger brother, Thomas, in South Carolina, and dwells on the glad welcome and "the noble feast" which they received.

The life of an average Virginia family in the days of which I write was rather colorless and uneventful. More than a hundred and fifty years had elapsed since the first English settlers came to Jamestown. Pioneer conditions had largely passed away. Except on the Western frontiers, toward the Blue Ridge and the Alleghanies, Indian wars, with their excitements, were things of the past, though as late as 1770 Lord Dunmore sent his famous expedition under Andrew Lewis to Point Pleasant, on the Ohio River. Society, for the most part, had settled down to an easy and commonplace way of getting on. There were only a few towns, and they were small and insignificant. The great majority of the white people resided on their own farms and tilled the fields with their own hands. Negro slavery had become a fixed institution, but had taken on a gentler form than anywhere else in the world. Not one-fourth of the people were slaveholders. If riches did not abound, poverty was likewise rare.

There was much good social fellowship, which was always accompanied by an abundance of eating and often by entirely too much drinking. The word "neighbors" meant all those living in a day's horseback ride of one another. They were much given to

the interchange of hospitalities. It was customary to keep open house both for friends and for strangers. Nobody but a churl turned a visitor away from his door. A traveler of decent appearance might pass from one side of the colony to the other and scarcely be taxed for a night's lodging.

Here and there lines of social cleavage were more or less distinctly drawn. In the Tidewater region especially and along the Upper Valley of the James a few great families, nearly all of which had crossed the ocean during Cromwell's time, exercised a sort of natural sway over their several communities. But in spite of all that has been said about the dominancy of these Cavaliers, the fact is that in the body and bulk of her citizenship and in the great currents of her life Virginia was and has always remained essentially democratic. The most of the men who followed George Washington and the most of those who followed Robert E. Lee were what in England would have been called yeomen. It is important to bear this in mind, as the contrary impression has been made by many writers, from one of whom I shall presently quote.

Educational opportunities in Virginia, except for the wealthy, were not good. In all America there were only three or four colleges, and in Virginia only one. Even ordinary schools were few and generally of inferior quality. Those who could afford it usually employed private tutors for their sons out of England. Mr. Dempster and Parson Ward, of Thackeray's great novel, are types each of a large class. Many young men besides Henry and George Warrington were sent across the sea to finish their studies and polish their

manners. Let us hope that the most of them fell into better company than those two brothers encountered. While many good private libraries could be found in the homes of the richer folk, it must be confessed that books were inaccessible to the masses. Of newspapers, which are now regarded as indispensable vehicles for the dissemination of intelligence, there were none at all; but of oral discussion, both in private circles and in public places, there was a great deal, and it wrought largely on the public mind.

Even George Washington grew up with a limited range of book knowledge; and it is not strange that William McKendree should have acquired still less. To the end of his life, though he learned to speak his mother tongue with precision and force, he would no doubt have been bothered by an examination in grammar, and he often took uncommon liberties with English orthography. Who his teachers were, we are nowhere told. One of them is handed down to us anonymously as "a vain man," not much better, probably, than an Irish hedge-master. Seventy-five years ago there was a tradition still floating through the Church to the effect that McKendree was a dull, slow boy; but his best biographer discredits it, and says: "While it may have comforted many a lazy and unpopular young preacher, it was probably without foundation in fact."

When McKendree was born, the first breath of discontent with the colonial policies of Great Britain had scarcely passed over the land. The most of the Virginia people still cherished a loving reverence for old England, called it "home," and gloried greatly in the fact that they themselves were men of English speech

and blood. In all his wide domain King George had no more loyal subjects than they. Any slightest suggestion of rebellion or revolution would have been cried down by them as a piece of treasonable folly. But events were shaping themselves beyond the knowledge or will of men. There is an element in the growth of nations that operates as inevitably, yet often as invisibly, as gravitation—the element of Divine purpose. In her season of apparent repose and inactivity Virginia was quietly nursing the strength which she would sorely need in the coming contest for freedom, a contest in which she bore so conspicuous and glorious a part.

It is a little off the track of my theme, but I cannot forbear to reproduce here from Senator Cabot Lodge's "Life of Washington" a passage which, barring the undue emphasis put on the aristocratic spirit of the colony, is both true and illuminating: "There was nothing languishing or effeminate about the Virginia planter. He was a robust man, quite ready to fight or to work when the time came, and well fitted to deal with affairs when he was needed. He was a free-handed, hospitable, generous being, not much given to study or thought, but thoroughly public-spirited and keenly alive to the interests of Virginia. Above all things else, he was an aristocrat set apart by the dark line of race, color, and hereditary servitude, as proud as the proudest Austrian with his endless quarterings, as sturdy and vigorous as an English yeoman, and as jealous of his rights and privileges as any baron who stood by John at Runnymede. To this aristocracy, careless and indolent, given to rough

pleasures, and indifferent to the finer and higher sides of life, the call came, as it comes to all men sooner or later; and in response they gave their country soldiers, statesmen, and jurists of the highest order and fit for the great work they were asked to do. We must go back to Athens to find another instance of a society so small in numbers and yet capable of such an outburst of ability and force. They were of sound English stock with a slight admixture of Huguenot, the best blood of France; and although for a century and a half they had seemed to stagnate in the New World, they were strong and faithful and effective beyond the measure of ordinary races when the hour of peril and trial was at hand."

It was such a civilization as this, speaking generally, that constituted the background of McKendree's life. In all that the word can mean, he was a true Virginian, though he never paraded the fact. Before he had quite passed his eighteenth year, the War of the Revolution broke out. In less than a generation Virginia had entirely changed front. In spite of her ancient loyalty she was the first of all the colonies, in the "Resolves" proposed by Patrick Henry in 1765, to proclaim undying resistance to the unjust exactions of the British Crown and Parliament; and she now threw herself with the greatest spirit into the armed conflict, rejoicing that the supreme leadership in this great emergency had been bestowed upon her favorite son.

Before the war ended, McKendree joined the army. The exact date of his enlistment is in doubt; but the fact is beyond dispute that he rose to the rank of adjutant, and was present in that capacity when Corn-

wallis surrendered at Yorktown, being then twenty-four years of age. The probabilities are that he saw, all told, about two or three years' service. The experience that he thus acquired in dealing with men proved of large value to him in coming years. To the end of his life there was something of the soldier and the commander in his character. He was in his prime the captain of the itinerant hosts, and rode at the front as one not unused to such a place. But it was only on the rarest occasions, and then with great modesty, that he ever referred to his military career. Nor did he even in extreme old age apply for a pension. He was incapable of putting a market value on his patriotism. Bishop Robert Paine, who was on terms of the closest intimacy with him for many years, acting as his amanuensis, traveling thousands of miles in his company, and passing over many of the Revolutionary battle fields, says that he never once heard him allude to his own part in the struggle: "In him the soldier of civil liberty was merged into the nobler character of a true and valiant soldier of the Cross. Having done his duty to his country in an emergency, he was contented, and never boasted of the fact." Still, it is a matter of record that when on a certain occasion in 1807 a company of roughs, led by a Major Somebody, undertook to break up one of his camp meetings on the frontier of Illinois, he announced from the pulpit that he and some of his companions had fought for their country and could not be intimidated or overawed by a show of violence. The hint proved effective, and the roughs retired.

CHAPTER II.

Genesis of Religious Experience.

It is proper to say here what ought perhaps to have been said before, that the state of religion in Virginia during and immediately after the Revolutionary War was exceedingly low. The Church of England, it is true, had been from the beginning established by law, but it had never been profoundly loved by the people as a whole. In its most prosperous estate it had ninety-six parishes served by ninety-three ministers. By a policy which seems strange indeed, and which would not now be possible, it had never had a resident bishop. The Bishop of London, to whose diocese the colony belonged, and who exercised a sort of absent jurisdiction, was represented on the ground by a commissary. For fifty years the Rev. Dr. John Blair, a Scotchman of ability and character, to whom Virginia owes a greater debt than she can ever pay, had filled that sub-Episcopal post. However it may be with Churches that hold to a non-Episcopal form of government, it is at least true that an Episcopal Church without a bishop in presence and authority is something of an anomaly and cannot develop in an orderly and healthy fashion.

When the fighting began, in 1776, a great many of the clergy forsook their flocks and fled to England. It is not at all uncharitable to say that, as far as the most of them were concerned, their room was better than their company. Their departure was, at any rate,

no great loss to the cause of good religion or good citizenship. Leaving out exceptional cases, they were, both in the matter of character and in the matter of competency, far from measuring up to any proper standard, and would not be tolerated to-day in any Church in America. The Episcopal Church in Virginia would now exclude them without a moment's hesitation. Not a few of them were given to drinking, gambling, cock-fighting, horse-racing, and many other such improprieties. Not many of them showed any deep sense of concern for the honor of their office or for the souls of their flocks. With such ministers it was certain that the laity would not furnish many shining illustrations of the graces of Christianity. Dr. Hawks, the historian of the Church, says that "between the two classes there was a mutual action and reaction of evil; each probably contributed to make the other worse."

About the only thing in regard to which these leaders in Israel showed any great activity was in seeking to repress all forms of dissent. Though not quite so bad in this respect as the New England Puritans, they were still bad enough in all conscience. The testimony of Dr. Hawks is as explicit as words could make it, and it is fully confirmed by many good authorities. Parsons whose daily lives were a shame and a scandal poured out the full measure of ecclesiastical censure and wrath upon Quakers, Presbyterians, and Baptists who were guilty of no offense except that they would not conform to the usages of the Church of England. These good people were dragged before petty magistrates, insulted, fined, beaten, and imprisoned. The

Baptists, who made their first appearance in the colony as early as 1714 and became very active after 1740, bore the brunt of the persecution, and stood steadfast as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Nothing restrained such acts of violence as those just mentioned except a growing public opinion against them. It is not strange that the successors and descendants of those courageous early Baptists have carefully preserved the keys and bolts of the jails in which so many noble men were confined and from the grated windows of which they preached to the curious multitudes that thronged upon the outside. "Soul liberty" is a great inheritance, especially when purchased at the cost of suffering and shame on the part of one's ancestors. To any one that knows the historic traits of the Presbyterians, who also began their work about 1740, it is hardly necessary to say that they too stood their ground.

In a letter written in 1764 James Madison, then a youth of fine intelligence and aspiring spirit, says: "Pride, ignorance, and knavery prevail among the priesthood, and vice and wickedness among the laity. This is bad enough, but it is not the worst I have to tell you. That diabolical, hell-conceived principle of persecution rages among some; and to their eternal infamy the clergy furnish their full quota of imps for such purposes. There are at this time in the adjacent county five or six well-meaning men in close jail for publishing their religious sentiments, which in the main are very orthodox." One of the three things that Thomas Jefferson ordered to be carved on his tombstone was the fact that Virginia in 1785, under his

leadership, enacted a statute for religious freedom. On such an achievement he had full right to congratulate himself. Massachusetts did not take the same step till far along in the nineteenth century.

But there is another side to this dismal picture. The Church was not wholly nor irreclaimably bad. It never is so. All sweeping criticisms must be taken, therefore, with a large grain of salt. There is a fine passage in Isaac Taylor's "Nilus" which is pertinent in this connection: "Dark ages or bright ages, and through times of sluggish movement, and through times of progress and energy, and while the visible course of the world's affairs is prosperous, and while it is tempestuous, and let Church historians make a good report or let them make an ill report of a century, still it is always true that a host of souls unreported of in any chronicle or census, even a great multitude of human spirits, is in training for their places in a kingdom that is not of this world." Men like Devereaux Jarratt and Archibald McRoberts in the pulpit, though few in number, were a sign of remaining vitality in the Establishment. In the dissenting bodies, moreover, which by the close of the Revolution embraced more than half the people, there were many faithful ministers and more than seven thousand laymen who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Here and there in every part of the colony humble homes could be found in which the light of true piety continued to shine. The McKendrees were no doubt included in this class. They were communicants in the Established Church and attended regularly on its ordinances. All the indications are that their lives were pure and whole-

some. The parents were of exemplary morality, and the children escaped contamination from the evil influences by which they were surrounded. Such a family is a sort of saving salt anywhere. A few such would have saved even Sodom.

In the meantime a new force was entering the colony. The Methodist movement, which began to take on an organized form in England in 1739, had now crossed the Atlantic, eager for new conquests in the Western world. As early as 1766 it had planted itself, through the instrumentality of Philip Embury and some other humble folk of Irish birth but German ancestry, in the city of New York, and probably a little earlier by the enterprise and zeal of Robert Strawbridge, an unmixed Irishman, in the colony of Maryland. The first itinerant Methodist to enter Virginia was likewise from the Emerald Isle, though born in England. His name was Robert Williams, and he appeared in 1772. Bishop McTyeire says that "he had not an embarrassingly high respect for the Church and clergy," and seems to have thought none the less of him for the fact. But Wesley was a little bit afraid of his hard-headedness, and Asbury never quite recognized his full worth. He labored only three years in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Virginia before being overtaken by death, in 1775. But in that brief period he laid indestructible foundations. When he passed on, he left an organized Church behind him in the last-mentioned field. A sentence from Bishop McTyeire may well be reproduced at this point: "When the undiscovered grave is found in which Robert Williams sleeps, no monument that can be raised over it will be too high or too hon-

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orable." Surely all will agree that this judgment is just. Blessed is the man that is first in a great enterprise.

Jesse Lee, who knew much of the early history of Methodism at first hand and still more from trustworthy witnesses, describes the man and his preaching as follows: "His manner of preaching was well calculated to awaken sinners and to encourage penitent mourners. He spared no pains to do good. He frequently went to church to hear the Established clergy, and as soon as divine service was ended he would go out of the church and, standing on a stump, block, or log, begin to sing, pray, and then preach to the people. It was common with him after preaching to ask most of the people about the welfare of their souls." He was not tied to any method, but dealt with every situation as circumstances seemed to demand.

A start once made, Methodism throve wonderfully in that quarter, as it has continued to do till the present day. At the Conference which met in Philadelphia in 1773 Williams was able to report a membership of one hundred. He was followed later by John King, George Shadford, Francis Asbury, and others of like spirit. The movement probably reached the McKendrees in about 1775 or 1776. They appear to have given it a prompt and hearty adhesion and were afterwards, therefore, included in that class which came to be known in the State as "old Methodists." The new experience that it brought them of the saving power of Christ made an epoch in their history. Thenceforward the service of God was their chief concern, a living and inexhaustible spring of blessedness

and joy. They had been decent and upright folk all their lives. Now they became vital and active Christians. Without at all losing the respectful regard which they had cherished for the Episcopal Church, they at once enrolled themselves in a Methodist class and became gladly subject to the whole Methodist discipline. In due time all the children followed the example of their parents and made an open profession of faith in Christ.

That William should be moved with the rest was inevitable. He had what Tertullian called the *animum naturaliter Christianum,* the instinctively Christian temperament. Even as a child, and without any very definite instruction, he had entertained very grave thoughts about God. In a letter written to Bishop Asbury in 1803 he mentions it as a cause for gratitude that he had always been kept free from gross immoralities and had sworn but one oath. The Bible stories greatly stirred his childish heart and awoke in him the desire to love and please God. At that time he was not far from the kingdom, and needed only proper guidance to bring him into it. Unfortunately, however, not even his parents fully realized what was going on within him; and even had they done so, they were scarcely prepared to deal wisely with his peculiar difficulties. The letter to which I have just referred contains the following paragraph: "I would frequently seek solitary places in the woods, there fall upon my face, and weep freely while I thought I was talking to Jehovah. This practice I followed till I became so serious that I was taken note of. The schoolmaster, who was a vain man and boarded at my

father's, began to laugh at me and to make remarks, and finally laughed me out of all my seriousness. I then heedlessly pursued the pleasures of the world, and do not remember to have had any more such impressions for several years." When will the Christian world fully learn that childhood belongs to Christ?

But when the Methodist revival broke out in the community, being then about eighteen or nineteen years of age, he experienced a resurgence in full force of his early religious feelings. His heart, long cold toward God, was again mightily warmed. Many around received the gift of conscious pardon and sonship, among them, as already said, several members of his own family. But he for some reason fell short of that satisfying attainment. In spite of this fact he resolved to lead a new life, and united himself with a class on probation as "a seeker." After some time he halted by the way and failed to obtain the prize. His own explanation of it is that he found it difficult to break with his companions, who did not share his religious desires. "Their conduct," he says, "being conformed to my reformed manners, I continued to enjoy the friendship both of the society and of the world, but in a very imperfect degree. They continued to counteract and impair each other until the love of the world prevailed, and my relish for genuine piety departed. I peacefully retired from the society, while my conduct continued to secure their friendship."

This, however, was not the end. He could not easily shake off the convictions that had found a lodgment in his soul. The more he thought himself rid of them, the more they rose up to disturb and distress

him. In the good providence of God he again fell desperately sick and came to what he thought was the door of death. "I utterly despaired of mercy," he says, "unless God should be graciously pleased to raise me up from my bed of affliction, and thus grant me an opportunity to see his face. For this I earnestly prayed. But even while it seemed to myself that I was so willing to embrace mercy on any terms, I well remember a thought that threw me into confusion by showing me my error. The following question was suggested: 'If the Lord would raise you up and convert your soul, would you be willing to go and preach the gospel?'" Though mercifully brought back to life and strength, he failed to make the full surrender, and went away from Christ, as did the rich young man in the gospel. "At last," he adds, "I lost the desire and returned to my old companions and the business of the world."

In the meantime his service in the army intervened. Everybody knows that a military camp is no good place for beginning or maintaining a Christian life. There have been, it is true, many exceptions to the general rule, but they do not break the force of the rule itself. War is in most cases terribly demoralizing. McKendree was fortunate in not losing his sound moral character while serving his country. Of this fact there is the best of evidence. But he certainly did lose a large part of his religious sensitiveness and his openness to the influence of the Spirit of God.

These apparently false and indecisive starts, if taken by themselves, would seem to argue a good deal of natural fickleness of will on the part of young Mc-

Kendree. Yet we must not judge too hastily or confidently. Only God knows what goes on in the depths of the human spirit. We read that many of the strongest and steadiest Christians in history took their first steps as the Lord's disciples in the same halting and hesitating fashion, and were long in reaching the point of a complete and irrevocable commitment to Christ. The time was coming, though he himself knew it not, when McKendree would parley no more, but surrender at discretion. When it did come, nothing could surpass the whole-heartedness with which he gave himself up, keeping back nothing for time or eternity, but putting himself with all he had on God's altar. It reminds us of the final crisis in the career of Augustine. My readers will pardon me, I am sure, if I dwell on it at some length, for it is the determining point in McKendree's career. The whole volume of his subsequent life flowed out from it as from an inexhaustible spring.

The year of our Lord 1787 should be written in red letters in the annals of Methodism. That mighty evangelist John Easter was abroad in the land. He had himself been converted under the preaching of Robert Williams, and was carrying on the true succession in a wonderful way. Like a flame of fire he went round and round the Brunswick Circuit, in which the McKendrees then lived. In that single year over one thousand eight hundred persons were converted under his ministry. His gospel became a sort of fresh apologetic for Christianity, for it was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. Wherever he spoke the whole country turned itself out to hear him, and few

heard who were not convinced of sin. Whole communities broke down before him. The results of his preaching can be visibly traced even to the present time. It was no mere blaze of excitement that he kindled. Vast transformations of character took place under his ministry. There is scarce anything like it outside of Methodist history. The nearest parallel to it is to be found in the great revival of 1800, of which I shall presently speak.

McKendree was at this time thirty years old, a full-grown man and much set in his ways. While not given to dissipation nor flagrant sin of any sort, he was apparently far from God. Because of a lack of perseverance, he had lost at least ten years of Christian privilege and opportunity. From a merely human point of view, it was little likely that he would now take the step which he ought to have taken long before. But the unseen Spirit whose operations are as silent as the revolutions of the stars was still at work in the abysses of his nature.

It came to pass on a certain Sabbath that he visited one of his neighbors who was on the point of going to church to hear a sermon from a Mr. Gibson, a local preacher, but on McKendree's arrival concluded to send a servant with his wife and remain at home. The two friends spent the morning in no very devout way, "drinking wine and reading a comedy." When the good wife returned after considerable delay, she reported strange things; how the preacher had brought many to floods of tears, to cries for forgiveness, and to shouts of joy. She also informed them that Mr.

Easter would preach at the same place on the following Tuesday.

What effect this report had on the host we do not know, but we do know what effect it had on McKendree. "My heart was touched," he tells us, "at her representation. I resolved to seek religion, and began in good earnest to pray for it that evening." That was going at the business in the right way. On Tuesday morning he went to church, "fasting and praying." Mr. Easter's text was: "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." The Holy Spirit gave effect to the message. "From this time," says McKendree, "I was wholly miserable." But a better day was soon to dawn on him. "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." When Mr. Easter returned, a month later, the trembling penitent found his Saviour and entered into rest. The whole great change is thus described by his own pen: "My convictions were renewed; they were deep and pungent. The great deep of my heart was broken up, its desperately wicked nature was disclosed, and the awfully ruinous consequences clearly appeared. My repentance was sincere. I was desirous of salvation, and became willing to be saved upon any terms; and after a sore and sorrowful travail of three days, which were employed in hearing Mr. Easter and in fasting and prayer, while that man of God was showing a large congregation the way of salvation by faith with a clearness which at the same time astonished and encouraged me, I ventured my all on Christ. In a moment my soul was

delivered of a burden too heavy to be borne, and joy instantly succeeded sorrow. For a short space of time I was fixed in silent admiration, giving glory to God for his unspeakable goodness to such an unworthy creature."

That sounds not unlike the experience of John Wesley in Fetter Lane. The tone of the one is identical with that of the other. After one or two brief seasons of trial, in which McKendree was tempted to doubt the reality of his conversion because it seemed too good to be true and too great to have taken place in so short a period of time, he settled down into an attitude of unhesitating faith and joy, never again to be seriously disturbed in regard to the matter of his personal acceptance with God. To the end of his earthly days he looked back with tender gratitude to this particular season of his life when he could first truly say, "Abba, Father." Blessed indeed is the man who knows that there came to him once an hour when all sense of dread and condemnation fell away from him, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding flowed like a river through his soul.

The early Methodists were diligently taught to grow in grace and to go on to perfection. Nothing less than this, they were assured, should be the goal of all their striving. While no man, so the instruction ran, could reach it by his own unaided effort, every man might hope to do so by the grace of God. According to Wesley's best definition of it, it consists in loving God with all one's heart and soul and mind and strength, and others as one's self; and it is nowise incompatible with the presence of many lingering infirmities, but is

incompatible with deliberate and willful sins. That is a Biblical and satisfactory statement. The other statement, that it consists in "the absolute extirpation of the roots of inbred sin," is psychological, or assumes to be so, and cannot be verified by any available test. It is better to stick to the doctrine that Christian perfection is Christian love raised to the highest power. If one chooses to call it entire sanctification, there is no objection, provided the terms are duly and fairly weighed and not forced to carry any burden of extra-Biblical meaning. Whether this great attainment is simply the culminating point of growth, at last reaching full maturity, or is the immediate result of a definite act of faith in a given moment of time, was much discussed then and has been debated ever since. Other questions of an incidental character, and not very profitable, were also raised in connection with the main issue. Men and women whose emotions were more active than their intellects sometimes lost their balance in brooding over it too exclusively. Cases were not rare in which very extravagant professions were blent with very imperfect conduct. These gave the enemy occasion to blaspheme. But the sound and substantial element of Christian truth in the doctrine furnished a sufficient ground for preaching it, and made it, in the language of John Wesley, "the special depositum of Methodism." The celebrated Dr. R. W. Dale, one of the foremost theologians of the past generation, says: "It contains a volume of ethical implications, the measure of which has not yet been fully taken."

Not long after McKendree's conversion, under the effective stimulus of sermons and of public and private

exhortations, he began to reach out with all the eagerness of his renewed heart for this great blessing. He hungered and thirsted for it. He groaned after it. Day and night he gave himself to the pursuit of it. Once more I shall suffer him to speak for himself: "The more I sought the blessing of sanctification, the more I felt the need of it. In its pursuit my soul grew in grace and in the faith that overcomes the world. One morning I walked into the field, and while I was musing such an overwhelming power of the Divine Being overshadowed me as I had never experienced before. Unable to stand, I sank to the ground more than filled with transport. My cup ran over, and I shouted aloud."

Let whoever will undertake to explain an experience like that as something that began and ended in McKendree's own mind. I cannot be guilty of such irreverence. Neither have I any desire to explain it in terms of a technical theology. The only thing that a believer can say is that God was in it. It did not terminate in itself, but left an everlasting impress on the character of McKendree, and showed itself thereafter in all manner of holiness and uprightness of conversation. An experience which vindicates itself in that way cannot be lightly put aside as of no real religious importance. This great baptism of the Spirit, not breaking in on him without antecedent conditions, but coming in answer to prayer and faith, was of tremendous significance to the young and ardent Christian. He never forgot it. Of the lonely field in which he wandered on that eventful morning, he could truly say: "This is none other than the house of God, and

this is the gate of heaven." Once and again as he moved farther on the way he received similar displays and attestations of grace. As we read of them in these colder times we are struck with a sense of awe and wonder. But really we ought not to be surprised by them. If God is the living God and the Father of the souls of men, there is nothing strange nor irrational in his coming to them in the sweet and awful disclosures of his love. He has not reared any barriers between himself and the creatures whom he has made in his own image. Has not every true Christian felt at one time or another the personal touch of God on him? Yea, has not every one in his moments of special surrender been almost overborne by the tides of God's life flowing in upon him? Call it perfect love, entire sanctification, or what you will, it is the experience in full and glorious measure of the powers of the world to come.

CHAPTER III.

Call to the Ministry.

The original and only true method of propagating the gospel may be gathered from John i. 35-51. On the day following his baptism Jesus was passing through the throng that lined the banks of the Jordan. When John the Baptist observed him, he said to two of his own disciples who were standing by: "Behold the Lamb of God." The disciples, so the simple narrative runs, "heard him speak, and they followed Jesus," lingering in his presence for the few remaining hours of the day. One of the two was Andrew of Bethsaida, the brother of Simon Peter. He too, as the story discloses, was a man of quick impulses. "He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias. And he brought him to Jesus." What else could he have done that would have been so natural and appropriate? The next day a similar incident occurred between Philip and Nathanael. The kingdom of Christ spreads by the spontaneous activity of those who have already become its subjects. All Christian history is only the exhibition of this simple fact. The instinctive inclination of every newborn Christian is to communicate the glad tidings to his kinsmen, friends, and neighbors. In no respect did Methodism more nearly resemble primitive Christianity than in the evangelistic temper that characterized its first adherents. It was this that gave it such expansive vigor and caused it to spread so rapidly over the land. Not the ministers alone, but also multitudes of the laity, men and women alike, threw them-

selves with the greatest possible zeal into the work of gaining fresh converts. The prayer of Moses that all the Lord's people might be prophets received then a large fulfillment.

It was altogether sure that young McKendree, being such a man as he was, and living in such an atmosphere as that which surrounded him, should at once desire to bestir himself for the salvation of others. We have his own testimony that his heart burned within him when he considered the irreligiousness of many of his acquaintances. Almost without knowing what he was doing, and simply following the generous impulses that rose up in his spirit, he began to pray, to exhort, to teach, finding, what many have since found, that his apprehension of his sonship toward God had brought him an unknown gift of utterance. As he himself said: "My heart was enlarged, and I saw more clearly than ever the danger of an unconverted state. For such (unawakened) persons I prayed with anxious care. Sometimes, when called on to pray in public, my soul would get in an agony, and the Lord would in great compassion pour out his Holy Spirit. Souls were convicted and converted, and Zion rejoiced abundantly in those days. Without a thought of preaching I began to tell my acquaintances what the Lord had done for me. It had its effect, and lasting impressions were made. Thus was I imperceptibly led on till the preachers and the people began to urge me to speak more publicly."

When the thought of formally entering the ministry was thus thrust upon McKendree's mind, he was much perplexed by it. The possibility of disobeying the Di-

vine will troubled him greatly; but the danger of running without a call was equally repugnant to him. At times he would be almost ready to say: "Here am I; send me." But when he reflected on the difficult and weighty responsibilities of the ministerial office and considered the scantiness and inadequacy of his own equipment, he drew back. While he was in this confused state of mind, his father, discerning his condition and surmising the real cause of it, said to him one day as they were sitting at the table: "William, has not the Lord called you to preach the gospel? I believe he has, and I charge you not to quench the Spirit." These solemn words, coming from such a source at such a time, impressed him greatly and no doubt helped him to reach a right conclusion.

A little later, when he was quite ill, Mr. Easter, to whom he was already so much indebted, came to see him, imploring the Lord to raise him up to health and strength and then to thrust him out as a laborer in the vineyard. With renewed submissiveness and much fasting and prayer he looked to God for direction, and was not disappointed. The direction came to him, as he himself in his later years always thought, through the active but unsolicited intervention of Christian friends. And why not so? The mind of the Church is often the medium through which the mind of the Lord is made known. The Church may not properly issue a call to preach. That is a prerogative which the Lord has expressly reserved in his own lands. But the Church must test all those who profess to have been called, and determine whether their profession is genuine. And her judgment is never to be despised.

About nine months after McKendree's conversion, and while he was listening with an open ear and a devout spirit for the Voice from on high, he was invited by Mr. Easter to attend in his company the approaching session of the Virginia Conference, which was to meet in the early summer of 1788 in the city of Petersburg, about twenty-five miles from Richmond. Esteeming himself greatly honored by such a request, and hoping to get both pleasure and profit from the journey, he promptly consented to go. But for several days after reaching Petersburg he saw little or nothing of the Conference, which always sat at that time with closed doors. When, however, the appointments were about to be announced, he was invited to come and hear them. As he had never been present on an occasion of the like kind, he was naturally more or less curious about it. The writer of these lines, now nearly half advanced in his seventh decade, has never yet forgotten the thrill of interest that swept through his spirit when he saw the spectacle for the first time, nor the deep feeling of awe when, a few years later, he himself first lined up to get his own marching orders. He expects to carry these memories into eternity.

McKendree supposed that he was entering the Conference room as a visitor and guest. To his great wonder he found out that he had been received into the traveling connection and sent as assistant preacher or "helper" to the Mecklenburg Circuit. He had not been recommended by any Quarterly Conference. He had not even been licensed to preach. He had not himself been consulted on the subject. He was not yet sure of his vocation. Nothing was ever more in-

formal or irregular. But the need of men was great and seemed to justify emergent measures. McKendree, moreover, was not entirely unknown. Some of the ablest ministers in the Conference were well acquainted with him and his family. They judged him a "safe case" and cordially commended him to the whole body. So without more ado he was started on that wonderful career which was to carry him over the continent as a laborer and a leader in the Lord's host, and was to end only with his triumphant death, more than half a century later. It used to be told that Bishop Robert Paine, one of the strongest and noblest men that ever adorned the episcopal office, was likewise brought into the ministry by a very short route. When he came up to the Annual Conference, his parents being Baptists, he had never been baptized. But neither this fact nor any other lack of technical preparation proved a bar to his being accepted. Such apparently lawless proceedings are not to be taken as a precedent. That the issue was satisfactory in the cases of these two eminent men is no argument for a general neglect of prescribed methods and usages. It must be remembered, too, that there was a careful preliminary scrutiny of the moral and religious character of McKendree and Paine. That is, after all, the main thing.

How was McKendree himself affected by this sudden and unexpected turn of events? He says: "Having been dismissed, I was walking in another room (the Conference sat in a private dwelling), when my presiding elder came in and, discovering my agitation, took me in his arms and said: 'While you were standing before the Conference I believed that God showed

me he had a work for you to do. Don't deceive me.' This had the most happy effect. It determined my unsettled mind. I had only wanted to know what was right, to do it as well as I could. I had the fullest confidence in the preachers; and in reflecting on the character and judgment of those who had recommended me, strengthened with what the presiding elder with flowing tears had just said to me, I resolved to reject my doubts, submit to their judgment, take the work to which I was appointed, and do as well as I could. Thus after more than eight months of painful suspense my heart was fixed, and I set out for my circuit."

This last clause has a pleasant sound. Mounted on a good horse (for he would never ride an inferior one), his saddlebags well packed with his limited wardrobe and his Bible and hymn book and other necessary things, the farewell kisses of the home folks on his lips, he "set out" across the country, across the State, over towering mountains and turbulent rivers, and through trackless forests, south to the land of the palmetto and the long-leaved pine, north to the Great Lakes, west to the Father of Waters and beyond, and east to the last extremities of New England. Nor did he halt nor break his gait till increasing years and gathering infirmities made it impossible for him to go farther. He "set out for his circuit" first, but kept his eye ever beyond all things visible and temporal on the city which hath the foundations. O brave-hearted and modest young man, trembling at thy own weakness, but trusting in One who never fails, the angel of the Lord rode with thee on that day, though thou sawest not the shining of his face nor heard the sound of his voice!

CHAPTER IV.

Four Years a Circuit Preacher.

In his first appointment as helper, or junior preacher, on Mecklenburg Circuit, McKendree was in most respects very fortunate. The presiding elder of the district was James O'Kelley, one of the oldest itinerants in the service, an able and effective preacher, and in his best days ranking next to Asbury himself in public esteem. At that time, though he was already beginning to show marked eccentricities of character, he had not yet been betrayed into those schismatic follies which have ever since obscured the greatness of his name. The preacher in charge of the circuit was Philip Cox, an Englishman, some years resident in America, profoundly and fervently religious, endowed with signal gifts of evangelism, and leaving a shining track behind him wherever he went. He was particularly noticeable for his zeal in the distribution of religious literature, and was the first traveling book steward, or general colporteur, of American Methodism. McKendree speaks of him with the greatest affection as "an instructor and a father." The Mecklenburg people were of a superior quality. In general culture and in sound piety they were worthy of praise. Many of them had been Methodists since the days of Robert Williams, and took a great delight in smoothing the way of the young preacher. It was well for him to make a start under such favorable conditions, for he was constitutionally timid and bashful and needed all the help that

he could get. In a letter written long afterwards he says: "It looked to me as if they wished to bear a part of the cross for me. On this circuit there were many deeply experienced Christians by whose walk and conversation I profited much. I hope I shall never forget how sweetly they used to talk of the triumphs of grace and the love of Jesus."

Even with the encouragement of such noble Christian friends McKendree once in a while suffered discomfiture. Dr. Stevens says: "At one of his appointments, after singing and prayer, he took his text and attempted to look at his audience; but such was his embarrassment that he could not lift his eyes from the Bible till he had finished his sermon. After the sermon, his host at the appointment left the house, supposing the preacher would follow him; but not seeing him, he returned to the church, and there found him seated on the lowest step of the pulpit stairs. He invited him to go home with him. McKendree said in a mournful tone: 'I am not fit to go home with anybody.'" Is there any Methodist minister anywhere in the world who has not sometimes felt just that way?

The following year McKendree was sent to Cumberland Circuit, with John Barker as preacher in charge. Bishop Paine says that "this field of labor lay on James River and principally in Washington County." How the Bishop, usually so accurate, could have lapsed into so serious an error, I do not know. Washington County, Va., is on the extreme western border of the State, next to the Tennessee line. The James River does not touch it by at least two hundred miles. By some curious slip of the pen the Bishop substituted

Washington for Cumberland. The James River people were also intelligent and hospitable to a marked degree. The lines had again fallen to McKendree in pleasant places. But at the end of six months he was returned to Mecklenburg. Such frequent changes were too common in those days to excite any remark. They constituted the rule rather than the exception. The fact that McKendree was able to take the back track shows that he had left a good name behind him.

By his diary and by information from other sources we are able to follow him quite closely during these two initial years and to see what manner of life he led. He gave himself up with great zeal to the study of the Holy Scriptures and of other good books. He literally prayed without ceasing. In the quietness of his own chamber, as he walked in the fields and the forests, and as he rode by the way, he lifted up his soul unto God. The early morning hours, "a great while before day," bore frequent witness to his devotions. Often in the middle of the night he rose from bed to fall upon his knees. He was much given to fasting, and, in fact, sometimes carried it almost to the limit of unwise asceticism. We find him once raising the inquiry as to whether a Christian man ought ever to laugh. Yet the dominant note in his life was one of joy. At times he received overwhelming manifestations of the Holy Spirit, which prostrated him in humility and love and speechless awe before God. His diligence never flagged. He preached nearly every day to all sorts of audiences, in all sorts of places; led the classes as he went around the circuit; visited the sick, encouraged the penitent, and edified the saints. To do the whole

work of a Methodist preacher was his supreme aim. He could have truly said, as Wesley said long before him: "Leisure and I have parted company."

It is a noteworthy fact that from the earliest beginnings of his ministry he showed a lively interest in the spiritual welfare of the colored people, preaching to them whenever opportunity afforded and otherwise seeking to do them good. From conviction he was opposed to slavery and would have been glad to see it wiped out had it been possible to do so by rational and peaceable means. But there is no proof that he at any time coincided with the radical views of Bishop Coke or was ever willing to foster a social revolution to secure the freedom of the colored people. He was the last man to approve a program of reformation by assassination or to take any part in the canonization of that bold and bloody murderer whose soul is still "marching on" in the disordered imaginations of his followers and admirers. I am saying this here and now to avoid the necessity of saying it later.

McKendree's profiting in his studies and other labors appeared unto all men. He grew steadily in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. His character, always serious and thoughtful, acquired increased depth and strength. The Church was much quickened under his ministry, and sinners were converted unto God. There was nothing spectacular nor dramatic in his methods. Nobody was astonished by the rapidity of his development. He did not come up, like Jonah's gourd, in a single night. Yet even in the beginning he gave the promise of those qualities as a preacher and an administrator that in his maturer man-

hood drew the attention of the nation. While his rise was by no means rapid, it was steady. The ground that he once gained he kept. He was not a flaming evangelist like John Easter. The multitudes did not throng and press upon him as they did later upon Bascom. But as time went on he had increasingly good audiences. Those who came once to hear him were likely to come again. He proclaimed the simple truth of the gospel in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. The Lord gave him souls as the sign and seal of his ministry. All the confusing doubts that he had felt about the reality of his call vanished away, and he at last rejoiced in the satisfying certainty that he was in the track of duty.

At the Conference which met at Petersburg June 14, 1790, McKendree, having accomplished his probation, was admitted into full connection, and was likewise elected and ordained deacon. His own account of it all is most interesting. Reading it we can easily imagine ourselves back in the little assembly in a private house and participating in the exercises of the hour. Here is an extract: "Got to Petersburg, found Conference sitting and the young preachers going through their examination, and to my comfort heard eighteen or twenty received without a blemish after standing the time of their probation. In the evening Bishop Asbury read his letters from different quarters, which gave accounts of the great work of God going on. The Lord made it a time of sweetness and of power to us in general. At the time of the adjourning of the Conference (for the evening) Mr. Jarratt, an Episcopalian preacher who was with us, went to

prayer, and a time of shouting we had." I wonder whether any Methodist Conference has ever since fallen to shouting over the praying of an Episcopal minister. The probabilities are that Jarratt prayed without a book. Anyhow, blessings on his memory! He was the kind friend of the Methodists when they were but a feeble folk, and his walk and conversation were a pattern which all men could safely follow.

Another quotation from the diary will not be amiss: "On Tuesday, second day of the Conference, Mr. Jarratt preached at eleven o'clock. After preaching, seventeen preachers being elected, they were called and presented to the bishop to be ordained deacons. Such a sight I never saw before. It was indeed a solemn time and seemed to affect the extensive congregation. For my own part, I think I was never thus affected before. I felt fresh desires and stronger resolutions than I ever experienced before to live to God altogether. The world this day seemed to be left very far behind and my soul encompassed with light." Strangely enough, he does not mention that he himself was one of the seventeen men ordained to the diaconate. Did an excess of modesty prompt this reticence? Or was he simply so filled with the solemn emotions of the hour that he forgot to set down his own name in the story?

At the close of the Conference McKendree was sent to Portsmouth Circuit, Jesse Nicholson in charge, but was removed and spent the latter part of the year with William Spencer on Surry Circuit. His diary for the year reveals nothing extraordinary, but still shows that he was making progress every way: "This was a

year of much comfort to my soul. I found an affectionate people, indeed. Many were deeply experienced saints who were a blessing to me. 'As iron sharpeneth iron,' so did the conversation of these brethren provoke me to love and good works. I found father, mother, brother, and sister in deed and in truth. It was my meat and drink to employ my spare moments in study. Fasting and prayer were a pleasure. I had an almost uninterrupted heaven below. The work of the Lord prospered in our hands, particularly in the latter part of the year. A considerable number of members was added to the societies."

There was only one thing that gave him much trouble or concern. His presiding elder, James O'Kelley, instead of counseling loyalty to the Church and its government, had become so set against Asbury and those who agreed with him that he spent nearly the whole year spreading dissatisfaction and organizing discontent, and, what is worse, did it all in the name of the Lord. McKendree was much under his influence, and suffered from it. Of this more by and by.

From the Conference which met April 20, 1791, McKendree was sent to Amelia Circuit. It joined the Cumberland Circuit, on which he had spent a part of his second year. His colleague was John Baldwin. The time for holding the Conference was changed this year from spring till winter, so that he really spent only six months in Amelia, which does not appear to have been marked in any way except by the continued efforts of O'Kelley to thwart Asbury and introduce radical changes into the government of the Church. That sore-headed old preacher had reached the point

where he could not be happy except in opposition to the powers that be. "I enjoyed peace of mind," says McKendree, "and comfortable fellowship with those among whom I labored. We began to have some hope of a General Conference to adjust our conflicting opinions, and our fears began to subside."

There is a constant temptation to quote from the diary. I must make space for at least one or two passages as showing that, despite all disturbances, McKendree kept very close to God. The date of the first passage is August 4, 1790: "Rose early; poured out my soul in prayer and praise; rode to Portsmouth; met the other preacher, and at twelve o'clock met class; had a comfortable time. Rode into the country and preached at 4 P.M. The power of the Lord was amongst the people; deep solemnity rested on the whole congregation; about twelve or fifteen down crying for mercy. One was converted and appeared to be as happy as a creature can be. Returned to town, preached at eight o'clock, and went to rest at half past ten o'clock, much fatigued in body, but with perfect calmness of soul."

And that of the second is October 10 and 11, 1790:

"*Sunday.*—Rose at 3 A.M.; family prayer at four, a time of heavenly sweetness to our souls. Went into the lovely fields when the blushing morn is dispersing gloomy night; breathed the sweet morning air with the love of God in my soul. About sunrise I began and preached to about thirty persons from, 'And the angel said unto the women, Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified: he is not here, for he is risen, as he said.' My dear Master gave me to feel

what I preached. Love feast for the band society followed. O how the saints did shout and tell the wonders of redeeming love! But had a cold time at public meeting."

"*Monday.*—Rest day. Spent my time in reading, writing, prayer, and meditation, except a little for conversation with my brethren. At twelve o'clock in my general prayer for mankind I prayed particularly for the preachers. Bless the Lord for the degree of conformity I feel to the Lord's will. O give me *universal* conformity and perfect resignation! In the evening walked to a distant grove and prostrated myself at the feet of the awful Jehovah. Met my brethren in *covenant prayer;* my soul all on fire."

CHAPTER V.

Four Years More on the Circuit, with an Episode.

All the Conferences which up to this time McKendree had attended (four in number) met at Petersburg in the spring or early summer. But the fifth one, of which we are now to speak, convened at Lane's Chapel, in Southampton County, December 21, 1791. Bishop Asbury says: "This Conference began and ended in peace." The two Conferences immediately preceding it had been anything but peaceable. It is likely that, as a General Conference was now promised for the next year, everybody felt disposed to let controversy cease till that time. Not even O'Kelley showed any spirit of warfare. Having traveled four full years, McKendree was duly elected by the Conference to elder's orders; and on Sunday, December 25, was ordained to that office by Bishop Asbury, who had before ordained him deacon, and afterwards ordained him bishop.

At the close of the Conference he was sent as preacher in charge to Greenville Circuit, with Joel Thacker as his assistant. He did not want to go. Quite possibly he expressed his opposition to doing so. But all the same he went. Let us hear his explanation: "This was the first station that I felt my will opposed to. It fixed me in the midst of my old acquaintances, many of whom were in our societies before me and considered themselves as my superiors. It was a

sifting time in those parts, and I expected that some of them would have to be excluded. This I feared they would not bear from me, which was the cause of my unwillingness to go to the circuit. But in this I was disappointed. I believe I never went through the business of a circuit with more ease. Although many were turned out, there were no fixed prejudices in consequence of the administration as far as I know. True, we had but few additions to the Church; yet we had many sweet and precious meetings." McKendree was not the first itinerant minister who found out that an appointment might be better than it looked, and neither was he the last one.

This brings us to another critical point in McKendree's career. I have alluded above to James O'Kelley. Being such a man as he was, and occupying such a position in the Church as he did, he naturally acquired a great influence over McKendree's mind, and came near to turning him quite aside from the path of usefulness and honor on which he had entered. As an Irishman, O'Kelley had a natural distrust of government, and for some reason or other he had come to cherish a persistent dislike for Bishop Asbury. The majority of Methodist historians do not hesitate to charge that he was controlled by envy and jealousy. I shall not indulge in so extreme a judgment, for it is well to be charitable even toward a man who has been nearly ninety years in his grave. But I will say that on the supposition of his having been a simple-minded and straightforward man it is difficult to understand the course which he now took. Waiving all other considerations, he and Asbury were so differently consti-

tuted that it would have been difficult for them in any complicated situation to see eye to eye or to act in harmony.

The organizing General Conference of 1784 had made no provision for the subsequent meeting of General Conferences, and does not even seem to have thought of taking such a step. As practical men they had met the emergency with which they were then confronted and did not undertake to forecast the difficulties that might arise in the future, nor to make provision against them. The Discipline of the Church they had drawn out in definite form, and left it with no suggestion as to how it might later be altered, amended, or improved. As a matter of course, however, it was still within the power of the whole body of ministers to change it at their will. What they had made they could unmake. If they had once got together, a mere majority vote would have been sufficient to effect this end.

But there was the rub. Getting them together was not an easy thing. True, they met annually in different groups, in different parts of the country. These groups were not yet Annual Conferences in our present sense of the term. They were without fixed geographical boundaries or definite membership. It was not till 1796 that such limitations were attached. Up to that time the number of them and their times and places of meeting were determined from year to year so as to best meet the convenience of the bishops and the preachers. To get any legislative measure through them all—and it had to go through them all before it could be effective—meant, therefore, an almost endless series

of debates. The inevitable effect was divisive. Men in different parts of the country could not look one another in the face, nor be sure that they really understood one another's minds. Nor was it at all likely that when the debates had been ended and the votes taken and declared there would be general acquiescence in the result.

But it was as sure as anything could be that legislation would become a necessity, and that new measures would be required to meet new conditions. That the Discipline of 1784 should come to be accepted as final and unalterable was not possible. No Protestant Church will ever agree that any set of ecclesiastical statutes is unchangeable. While Church polities should not be altered in mere wantonness, they must be held open to such improvements as the enlarging experiences of godly men may deem best. The worst enemy to a true conservatism is the temper that doggedly resists all innovations, for it is certain to breed radicalism by reaction.

Within a few years Asbury and the other leaders began to see that they must devise some workable scheme by which the Connection could express its mind and judgment on living issues in such a way as to avoid the awkward and cumbersome method of voting through the yearly Conferences. It seems strange to us that they did not at once convene another General Conference. The objection offered to it was that it would cost a great deal of time and money. But this objection was no more potent than it would have been in 1784, save that now there were many more preachers to come together, and the question of entertaining

them in one place would have presented some substantial difficulties. Back of the economical argument there was probably the lingering fear that if all the preachers should meet in one body they might do violence to the existing order. Asbury never quite got over his early training, nor ceased to be somewhat doubtful about trusting mere majorities.

As an expediency, then, it was determined to create a Representative Council. In 1789 this plan was laid before the yearly Conferences by Bishop Asbury, and met with their almost unanimous approval. Later in the year—that is to say, on December 1—the first session of the Council was convened at Cokesbury College, Abingdon, Md. As above indicated, it was in some sense a delegated body, being composed of the bishops and the presiding elders. If any one of the presiding elders should find it impossible to attend in person, he was requested to send some other elder from his district as a substitute. It was stipulated that at least nine elders must be present for valid legislation. If for any reason the number should fall short of this stipulation, the bishops were instructed to fill the vacancies by choosing elders from any quarter.

The powers of this Council, though apparently great, were really very small; for it could not perfect legislation, but only mature and frame suggestions which, before becoming laws, must be passed upon by the preachers in the yearly Conferences. Even this it could not do without a unanimous vote. That was simply going round a circle, therefore, and coming back to the same point. The only advantage gained was the possibility—a mere possibility at best—that the sugges-

tions of the Council would carry so much weight as to be sure of a kindly reception and ratification at the hands of the preachers in the Conferences. The result did not justify even this expectation, but became a fresh source of wrangling and disputation.

The men of the first Council were men of light and leading. If the Church had been searched throughout, their superiors could not have been found. They were: Richard Ivey, from Georgia; Reuben Ellis, South Carolina; Philip Bruce, Northern District of Virginia; James O'Kelley, Southern District of Virginia; Nelson Reed, Western Shore of Maryland; J. Everett, Eastern Shore; John Dickens, Pennsylvania; J. O. Cromwell, New Jersey; Freeborn Garrettson, New York. But not one of them was chosen by the Conferences. They were members of the Council by virtue of their office. Bishop Asbury gives a very brief account of the proceedings. "All our business," he says, "was done in harmony and love." This business seems to have related chiefly to the wants of Cokesbury College, the printing of books and tracts, and the securing of funds for the suffering preachers on the Western frontier. That was not a very formidable program, to be sure. What there was in it to frighten anybody, it is very difficult to see. Meager as it was also, it was of no effect whatever until it should first be carried round by Bishop Asbury for the approval of the brethren.

O'Kelley, it will be noticed, was a member of the Council. He had offered no objection to the project in the first place, nor any to the specific measures which it had proposed for acceptance or rejection. If he had been minded to object, his one vote could have stopped

everything. But he soon afterwards got it into his head that mischief was brewing. It is possible that on full reflection he saw or imagined that the innocent-looking Council might develop into an instrument in the hands of an oligarchy for the oppression of the Church. So he determined to take up an antagonistic attitude, and he did it at once. Traveling fast, he reached Virginia in advance of Asbury, and opened a crusade of systematic opposition. McKendree fell under his spell. Within a few months the two traveled together to the Conference, June 14-20, 1790, and O'Kelley used all his power to poison the mind of the young man, not only against the proceedings of the Council, but also against Asbury himself. From any point of view, it is a pitiful story. When the Conference met, everything went well until Asbury, as in duty bound, brought out the budget from the Council. It had been agreed in advance by O'Kelley and his followers to treat it with scant courtesy. They not only repudiated it, root and branch, but "refused to adopt any accommodating plan." Asbury, who was too wise to fight against such odds, behaved very graciously and went right forward with the customary business. McKendree had evidently looked for some tyrannical outbreak from the chair, and was not a little surprised at the mildness of the Bishop.

A taste of success whetted O'Kelley's appetite for controversy. He put in the larger part of the next year keeping up an acrimonious agitation. Wherever he went the burden of his conversation was that the Church was in danger of destruction; that Asbury and the leaders who sided with him—he called them a

"party"—were filled with a lust for money and power; and that it was imperative upon those who truly loved God to take steps for staying the plague. After some delay, he accordingly called the preachers of his district together at Mecklenburg to consider the whole situation—a sort of Council of his own. The most of them agreed with him, but some dissented. All were ready to demand the calling of a General Conference as the only satisfactory remedy. The demand itself was right and wise, but the spirit which lay behind it was bitter and destructive.

A second session of the Council met in Baltimore December 1, 1790. In view of the ill success that had attended the efforts of the year before, and of the deep feeling that was generally prevalent in the Church, it adjourned without making any recommendations. No other session was ever convened, and thus ended this well-meant but impotent attempt to deal with the difficulties that grew out of the very successes that the Church had achieved. In the meantime Bishop Coke had thrown his influence in favor of a General Conference, one of the wise things he did among many unwise ones. The Church at large proved to be of the same mind; and in November, 1792, the General Conference met in the city of Baltimore.

McKendree was present, having gone up from Greenville Circuit in company with O'Kelley, whose wrath against Asbury was nowise placated, though he had secured the object which was supposed to be the end of his desires. By this time McKendree was pretty thoroughly saturated with the views of his elder and ready to follow him in most measures.

Though he was now in the fifth year of his ministry, he does not seem up to that time to have pondered with special seriousness the problems of Church government, nor to have taken an accurate measurement of the men with whom he had been intimately associated.

Strangely enough, there is no official record of this General Conference of 1792, though its importance was great enough to have justified the most careful preservation of its proceedings. Jesse Lee, who was present, states that it was a large body composed of men from all those parts of the country to which Methodism had spread. There was a feeling in the air that something unusual was about to take place, and something did. After one day in framing rules of order, the Conference went regularly over the whole Discipline with a view to such changes as might be needed.

O'Kelley was loaded for Asbury. He had come up for the express purpose of putting a curb on the episcopacy, and evidently expected to succeed in his venture. The Conference of 1784 had left the appointment of the preachers in the hands of the bishops, as it had before been in the hands of Wesley and his chief American assistants. That was the original Methodist plan. It had worked well. O'Kelley had no personal ground of complaint; for ever since his ordination, eight years before, he had served continuously on one district. But the mere sight of power in the hands of other men seemed to madden him. He would have none of it. So he took an early start, and on the second day proposed the following amendment to the Discipline: "After the bishop appoints the preachers at Conference to their several circuits, if any one think

himself injured by his appointment, he shall have liberty to appeal to the Conference and state his objections; and if the Conference approve his objections, the bishop shall then appoint him to another circuit."

On the face of it, nothing could be fairer. It is no wonder that at first a majority seemed to approve it. But a long debate followed, and there is nothing that is more illuminating than an honest debate. The statement is made by contemporary authority that no subject had ever before so fully called forth all the strength of the preachers. As the issues involved touched chiefly the administration of Bishop Asbury, Bishop Coke, who was present on one of his flying journeys, presided, and expressed his fair surprise at the vigor and ability of the disputants. Dr. Stevens says: "The discussion lasted nearly a week (to be exact, three days). It was the first of those great parliamentary debates which have given preëminence to the deliberative talent of the body. It was led chiefly by O'Kelley, Ivey, Hull, Garretson, and Swift for the affirmative; and by Willis, Lee, Morell, Everett, and Reed for the negative—all chieftains of the itinerancy and eloquent speakers."

After much discussion, on motion of John Dickens, the subject was divided thus: 1. "Shall the bishops appoint the preachers to the circuits? 2. Shall a preacher be allowed an appeal?" The first question was carried affirmatively without opposition. But the crux still remained. The negative argument which seemed to have most weight was that an appeal from the Bishop to the Conference would be impracticable. Thomas Ware summarizes it as follows:

"Should one preacher appeal, and the Conference say that his appointment should be altered, the bishop must remove some other one to make room for him, in which case the other might complain and appeal in turn." Ware adds that, nevertheless, he believes O'Kelley might have carried his point if he had shown a better spirit. Some of his followers were very violent and said: "It is a shame for a man to *accept* such lordship as the bishops exercise, much more to *claim* it, and that they who would submit to this absolute dominion must forfeit all claims to freedom and ought to have their ears bored through with an awl and be fastened to their master's door and become slaves for life." Those old-time brethren were not always mild of speech.

The outcome of it all was that the motion to give the right of appeal was lost by a large majority. Asbury was not elated by the result. He knew, it is true, that a bishop without authority to fix the appointments would become a mere moderator, and that the itinerancy would soon break down under such an arrangement. But he did not covet the heavy responsibilities that the law imposed upon him. "I have been much grieved for others and distressed with the burden I bear and must hereafter bear." Nor, I feel sure, has he ever had a successor in office that would not have been glad to be exempt from so heart-crushing a duty as that of stationing the preachers.

O'Kelley, who was terribly disappointed when his seeming victory was turned into defeat, did not hesitate for a day as to what course he should pursue. The next morning he and a few of his adherents addressed

a letter to the Conference, stating that they could no longer retain their seats in that body. All possible efforts were made to conciliate them. A committee of three, including Freeborn Garrettson, who had sided with them in the debate, was designated to visit him and urge him to reconsider his determination; but all to no purpose. Not even an interview with Bishop Coke, who shared many of his views, proved of any avail. He and his partisans—those, that is, who were beyond compromise—left the city before the Conference adjourned. Carrying their saddlebags, great-coats, and other bundles, they walked to a place twelve miles distant in the country, where they had left their horses, and rode off home in high dudgeon. William McKendree was one of the company. He had become convinced that O'Kelley's position was correct and followed his convictions honestly, though no doubt with a sad heart. Jesse Lee, who knew O'Kelley well, expressed deep regret at seeing him go off in such a humor, because he was sure that "the old man" meant mischief.

On the way to Virginia O'Kelley fully uncovered his plans to his companions. He had burned the bridges behind him and would take no backward steps. He meant to organize an entirely new Church. It should be a glorious Church in every particular—without bishops, without slavery, without concentration of authority anywhere. The program was attractive to many minds, and seemed for a time to have in it the elements of success. But in the long run it came to naught. For many years it created great disturbances in Virginia and North Carolina. The echoes of it

were heard in the forests of Kentucky and Tennessee, where James Haw, one of the most effective pioneer preachers, was drawn off by it. It arrested, in fact, for two full quadrenniums the growth of the whole Church. But it yielded no valuable and permanent results. The organization which was effected at Manakintown, Va., in 1793, with O'Kelley taking the lead in everything, had the seeds of schism in itself and soon split up into several minor bodies.

Jesse Lee, writing in 1809, says: "They have been divided and subdivided till at present it is hard to find two of them that are of one opinion." O'Kelley issued pamphlet after pamphlet assailing Asbury and the Methodist Episcopal Church. Nicholas Snethen and others made vigorous replies. Asbury concluded to take no hand in the war of words, though he had gathered many documents for his defense. His attitude was patient and noble. Referring to his accusers, he said: "I bid such adieu and appeal to the bar of God. I have no time to contend, having better work to do. If we have lost some children, God will give us more. Ah! this is the mercy, the justice of some who under God owe their all to me and my *tyrants,* so called. The Lord judge between them and me." A few congregations yet remain that had their origin in this disastrous schism; but they have always been a mere backwater in the Methodist movement, without outlook or influence upon the world, and to-day they are a negligible quantity even in the communities in which they at first had their greatest show of strength.

Ten years after the revolt Asbury and O'Kelley met at Winchester, Va., talked of things indifferently, but

said nothing of their personal antagonisms, prayed, and parted in peace. O'Kelley survived till October 16, 1826, and died in his ninety-second year. Dr. Leroy M. Lee says: "He retained to the latest period of his life unabated confidence in the purity and power of his system. In age and feebleness his hope in the work of his hands did not desert him. He went down to the grave, according to one of his followers, satisfied with the past and peaceful and hopeful with respect to the future."

But to get back to McKendree. He was not quite ready, even after he left the General Conference, to abandon the ship. He still cherished a lingering hope for some sort of adjustment, though he could not see how it was to be brought about. A few weeks later—that is, November 26—the Virginia Conference met at Manchester, opposite Richmond. McKendree was not present. Bishop Paine says: "The interval between the General and Annual Conferences was too short to afford time for the removal of the feeling excited at the former. Sympathizing deeply with his old and apparently his best friend, imperfectly acquainted with the subject of Church government, and with the docility almost of a child confiding in the representation of Mr. Asbury's character and of the consequences likely to result to the Church from the action of the General Conference as instilled into his mind by Mr. O'Kelley, McKendree respectfully wrote to the Conference, declining to take an appointment for the ensuing year."

When the Conference was ended, Bishop Asbury, who was sleeplessly vigilant for the welfare of the

Church, set out on a tour of visitation through the disaffected region of the State, including especially what had long been O'Kelley's district. That was a wise piece of strategy, well conceived and well executed. It brought him soon into the neighborhood of McKendree's home. The two met in a friendly and pleasant spirit, with the result that when the Bishop passed on McKendree went with him, by special request, as his traveling companion for a few weeks. The outcome of this jaunt might have been easily foreseen. McKendree gained an entirely new point of view. He came to see that Asbury, instead of being an ambitious tyrant, full of plans for his own aggrandizement, was really a modest and gentle Christian man, bent solely on the welfare of the Church and the glory of God. "It gradually dawned on him, too, that the adoption of O'Kelley's late favorite measure meant the ruin of the general superintendency and of the whole itinerant system. The spell of the enchantress was broken. Humbled and mortified at his own weakness, with characteristic candor he confessed his error, was received again into the confidence of the warm-hearted old Bishop, and was at once sent to the city of Norfolk. This was the amount of McKendree's defection. His itinerancy was temporarily suspended at his own request; but after about a month he resumed his position and his work in the ranks with his late associates, having become a wiser man."

The work at Norfolk proved to be pleasant enough, except that there was a good deal of agitation created by the withdrawal of O'Kelley's partisans from the Church. McKendree bears testimony to the fact that

the grace of God was sufficient for him in the midst of his perplexities: "On this critical station the Lord was singularly good to me. In the midst of my confusion I had access to the throne of grace and was enabled to preach. Mercy and power attended the word, and the people were blessed, so that I had refreshing cordials in the midst of many bitter draughts." Ira Ellis was his presiding elder and helped him mightily in every way. To use McKendree's own words: "He was a comfort to me. From him I obtained information and counsel which were of inestimable value to me in my dilemma." This Ira Ellis was a Virginian. He entered the itinerancy in 1781 and continued in it for thirteen years, locating in 1795 on account of domestic necessities. His ministry reached all the way from Pennsylvania to South Carolina and everywhere commanded great respect. Asbury, who was not effusive in praise, pays him this high tribute: "He was a man of quick and solid parts. I have thought, had fortune given him the same advantages of education, he would have displayed abilities not inferior to Jefferson or Madison. But he had what is better than learning: he had undissembled sincerity, great modesty, deep fidelity, great ingenuity, and uncommon power of reasoning. He was a good man, of even temper." Nothing could have been more fortunate for McKendree than to be thrown into close association with such a man.

The Conference met at Petersburg November 25, 1793, with fifty-five preachers present, Bishop Asbury again presiding. For some reason or other, which, of course, is not disclosed in the minutes, McKendree

was moved to Union Circuit, in South Carolina. He had never before labored outside of his native State nor traveled beyond its bounds, except occasionally into Maryland. If he lost the blessing of close companionship with Ira Ellis by this change, he fell into the equally good hands of Philip Bruce, who was presiding elder on the new district. Bruce was a North Carolinian. His name looks and sounds Scotch, but it was originally De Bruise. He was of Huguenot ancestry. He had been a soldier of the Revolution. Joining the Virginia Conference on probation in 1781, he remained thirty-six years in the itinerancy. In 1817 he took a superannuate relation and removed to Tennessee to spend his closing days with his kindred, who had preceded him thither. In every station that he occupied he showed great ability and great consecration. But for his advanced age, he would probably have been elected to the episcopacy in 1816. After the lapse of a century the memory of his name is still a pleasant odor in all the fields in which he labored. For one quarter of this year McKendree was the traveling companion of Bishop Asbury, his place on the circuit being supplied by Tobias Gibson, the same who afterwards became the founder of Methodism in Mississippi.

For several years now there had been separate Conferences in Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina; but on December 25, 1794, all the itinerants in these three States, about eighty in number, met at Mrs. Mabry's, in Greenville County, Va. It was perhaps the largest Annual Conference that had ever met in America, and it embraced a good deal of ability and weight. McKendree got still another long move, this

time to Botetourt, in Southwest Virginia, with John Kobler as his presiding elder. The two were to be true yokefellows again, after the lapse of some years, in the far West. Dr. Stevens states that this year he really had four circuits under his care, traveling each of them for one quarter; but I can find no confirmation of the statement elsewhere. On this and on the preceding circuit McKendree's diary fails us, much to our regret. But we know that here, as elsewhere, he measured up to all his responsibilities. After this he was to travel circuits no more, but was to be set in a larger sphere and to be charged with weightier obligations, which could not have been the case if there had been any weakening of his intellectual or spiritual qualities or any diminution in the volume and excellency of his activities. As a circuit pastor he had "purchased to himself a good degree and great boldness in the faith." It was full time for him to move up. "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things."

CHAPTER VI.

First Five Years in the Presiding Eldership.

As intimated in the close of the last chapter, McKendree was now about to enter upon a wider field of labor than any he had hitherto occupied. Having been fully tested in many places as a circuit preacher, and having been found competent and faithful on all the ground, he was deemed worthy to be invested with the duties and responsibilities of the presiding eldership. This office, which has become one of the badges of Episcopal Methodism, had grown up in a natural and orderly way. Nobody designed it in advance. It was not a piece of a preconceived ecclesiastical machinery. It came providentially, and because it filled a felt want it remained and abides to this day. At the Christmas Conference of 1784 only a few of the preachers were elected and ordained elders. There was not the slightest disposition to lay hands suddenly and indiscriminately on just anybody that might desire it. Those who were supposed to be the most competent were picked out for this distinction. On the whole, the results justified the choice that was made. The names of John Tunnell, William Gill, Leroy Cole, Nelson Reed, John Haggerty, Reuben Ellis, Richard Ivey, Henry Willis, James O'Kelley, and Beverly Allen became known throughout the entire Church, though the last two failed to fulfill the expectations that were entertained concerning them.

These picked men were judiciously distributed in

every part of the country to which Methodism had spread, that they might be able to administer the sacraments with reasonable regularity in all the circuits. By successive steps their work was enlarged until it became one of general oversight, and after 1792 they were formally designated as presiding elders. The title, indeed, had been occasionally used prior to that time, but not regularly. Thenceforward it had an accredited standing in Methodist terminology. Our brethren beyond the Ohio have swapped it off in recent years for district superintendent. If they are pleased with the change, nobody else has a right to object; but I sincerely hope that my own Church will not follow the example. Presiding elder is Biblical, ecclesiastical, historical. It has a fixed and definite meaning, whereas the five-syllabled "superintendent" is not only awkward on the lips, but may have any one of several distinct significations. The Wesleyans shorten their superintendents to *supers*. If that abbreviation should become common in America, it will be an additional reason for adhering to the old name.

The office itself has been one of much consequence. In every generation it has been held by many men of might. Merely to call the roll of really great presiding elders would take much more space than I can spare. It must be admitted that the critics of the office have not been few nor gentle. First and last, they have stirred up a good deal of opposition, and they are still at work. The most of them are men who have not themselves been called to preside. They tell us that, whatever may have been the case in the past, there can certainly be no reason nowadays for burdening the

Church with the expense of a needless supervision; and they do say now and then that the office has become a sort of city of refuge for broken-down or incapable pastors. There may be some truth in these allegations, but not enough to give them great weight. Anyhow, if there is nothing the matter with the presiding eldership except the presiding elders, that is a condition that can be remedied by wiser appointments. My own opinion is that, in spite of changed conditions, the presiding eldership never before had in it such potencies for good as it has at the present time. Only fill it with the right sort of men, and it will continue to be one of the most important pieces of our polity. Laying all other considerations aside, it is a necessary adjunct of the episcopacy. The two are bound to stand or fall together. If one goes, the other will not be far behind it. Whether the episcopacy is worth keeping is a question that may itself raise much debate. But in case we desire to retain it, we must hold fast to the presiding eldership also. Bishop McTyeire says weightily: "It was a great step forward in the efficient and thorough organization of Methodism as an Episcopal Church when this office, with its place and powers, was defined. . . . The presiding elders are the supplement of the itinerant general superintendency; without them it would be impracticable on a continental scale. They complete the local supervision and make the general one possible."

At the session of the Virginia Conference which met at Salem Chapel, Mecklenburg County, November 24, 1795, Bishop Asbury, who had, as he often showed, a keen sense for picking men with a capacity for

leadership, appointed McKendree to a district which stretched from the Chesapeake Bay northward and westward over the Blue Ridge and the Alleghany Mountains, and included a large stretch of country on the Western waters. Fifty of the North African bishoprics of Augustine's time might have been included in it, All that part of it lying close to the bay was in the oldest part of the State. But the most of it back toward and beyond the mountains was new, rough, and thinly inhabited, with such general conditions of living as made it far from being an inviting field to any except a truly heroic minister. To dwell upon details is not necessary, but it may be well to point out a few things. All traveling was by horseback. Roads and bridges were few and of inferior character. Hotels were scarcely known. The private houses, though usually open to strangers, were not tidy nor comfortable. In the remotest mountain sections they were often lacking in common decency. It was no easy task that McKendree faced. But he was a seasoned soldier, a true veteran; and neither toil nor hardship nor peril could daunt him. On this post he remained three full years. His nominal salary was $64 per annum, but it never actually reached much more than half that sum. His memorandum book shows his receipts with scrupulous carefulness. He kept his accounts as rigidly as if he had been handling thousands. But nobody ever heard a cry of poverty from his lips. His wants were simple. He did not desire many things. What he could not pay for out of his slender stipend he did without. If he had had a wife and children, it would have been his duty to look

after their comfort; but, as he was a bachelor, he had the right to carry self-denial to the last limit.

In the meanwhile he was constantly gaining in breadth and maturity of judgment, in power to deal wisely and easily with men and things, and in the depth and reach of his religious experience. Bishop Soule, who never spoke without duly measuring his words, says in the discourse which he delivered on the occasion of McKendree's death: "The oversight of the district in the administration of the Discipline was conducted with great wisdom and prudence and to the satisfaction of the preachers and members. The spirit of schism which had previously prevailed in some parts of the district greatly subsided, and the love of union, peace, and order was revived." That was just what we should naturally have expected when McKendree was in charge. He was himself the incarnation of system and order, and he carried with him wherever he went the spirit and disposition of the peacemaker. His own record, while very modest, is a little more ample. He says: "I was blessed with many friends, abundant in kindness, and some of them able counselors. We were blessed with a revival of religion. Many professed to obtain regenerating grace and joined the Church. The members provoked one another to love and to good works, and their advancement in the divine life was evident. The abundant labors and cares which the charge imposed were too great for my strength. My studies were, therefore, partially prevented by attention to other branches of duty, and my nervous system was otherwise impaired. But I was abundantly compensated by having intimate

union and communion with my adorable Saviour, and the increasing prosperity of the Church at once invigorated my zeal and increased my joy."

In 1799, for some reason that is nowhere stated, McKendree was removed from his district in the Virginia Conference to a contiguous one in the Baltimore Conference. His new field was not quite so large as the old one, though it was large enough in all conscience. It reached from the Chesapeake across the Blue Ridge, but stopped at the western foothills of the Alleghanies. As his health had not been robust, it may have been the purpose of Bishop Asbury to lessen somewhat the measure of his necessary activities. This is simply a surmise and may have nothing in it. Even in his narrower limits McKendree had no time for idleness nor even for much rest. He tells us that the year was "full of trials." There is no easy place for a conscientious minister of Christ's gospel. But McKendree found grace and strength according to his day and need. Speaking of the difficulties that compassed him about, he declares: "They were forgotten in overwhelming communion with God and reviving interviews with my followers. Here I found fathers and mothers in Israel by whose example I was edified and comforted." In the spring of 1800 he was retransferred to the same district in the Virginia Conference from which he had been taken the year before. This, of course, was not done without reason; but as the nature of the reason is nowhere set down, it is useless to look for it. The Methodist chronicles of those days are, as a usual thing, extremely concise and often leave

us guessing about things in regard to which we should be glad to have exact knowledge.

That McKendree attended the General Conference which met in May, 1800, in the city of Baltimore, is certain. Henry Boehm mentions in his journal the fact that he saw him there. The Journal of the Conference also reveals his presence, but it does not show that he was very active in the proceedings. Dr. Stevens calls attention to only one matter in regard to which he participated. As usual in Methodist assemblies of those days, there was a good deal of feeling on the subject of slavery. Nicholas Snethen, a great man, but always a radical, moved: "That this General Conference do resolve that from this time forth no slaveholders shall be admitted into the Methodist Episcopal Church." William Ormond, of North Carolina, was of much the same mind. Ezekiel Cooper suggested a more conservative course: "That a committee be appointed to prepare an affectionate address to the Methodist societies of the United States, stating the evils of the spirit and practice of slavery and the necessity of doing away with the evil as far as the laws of the respective States will allow," etc. William McKendree, practicable and sensible as always, moved: "That this General Conference direct the yearly Conferences to appoint a committee to draw up proper addresses to the State legislatures from year to year for the gradual abolition of slavery." Instead of mere generalizations concerning the evils of the institution, he proposed a feasible plan for mitigating them. That was like him.

CHAPTER VII.

Set over the Forces in the Great West.

When the General Conference of 1800 came to an end, McKendree promptly returned to his district in Virginia. But he was not to stay there very long. In the early autumn of the same year Bishops Asbury and Whatcoat paid him a visit in the Greenbrier country on their way to what was then called the Great West. Whatcoat had just been elected to the episcopacy and was making his first round in company with his senior colleague. He was one of the two elders whom Wesley ordained in England in 1784 and sent over to America in company with Bishop Coke, Thomas Vasey being the other. He was not a man of uncommon intellect, nor had he rendered any signal service to the Connection. Besides, he was now nearly sixty-five years of age and by no means robust in health. That he should have been chosen over the brilliant and quick-witted Jesse Lee, who had served with distinction in many fields and had especially led the way into New England, is one of those events that defy full explanation. Nevertheless, there are some considerations that throw light upon it. The piety of Whatcoat was beyond doubt and was, indeed, of that higher quality that is fairly entitled to be called saintliness. Speaking of his ordination, Henry Boehm says: "Never were holy hands laid upon a holier head." At the time of his death, six years later, Asbury declared: "A man so

uniformly good I have not known in Europe or America." Besides, he was a preacher of great power and pathos. The fact that Wesley had suggested him for the general superintendency as far back as 1792 had no doubt something to do with his being chosen now. It is also probable that Asbury desired him and let fall some words to that effect. The report got out that he had gone further and spoken disparagingly of Lee, but he afterwards denied it in a letter. Furthermore, it appears likely that to some extent personal jealousies entered into the election. Good men as they were, the primitive Methodist preachers were still decidedly human. The very qualities that made Lee so popular with the people had the natural effect of arousing the antipathies of some of his slow-going brethren. Envy loves a shining mark. It took three ballots to determine the result. On the second ballot there was a tie vote, and on the third Whatcoat had a majority of four. Bishop Coke, who always turned up at the General Conferences, preached the ordination sermon, and both he and Asbury joined in the laying on of hands. Whatcoat did not shine in his new position. He lacked initiative. But he made a good assistant bishop to Asbury, preached with great acceptability wherever he went, led a beautiful and holy life, and in 1806 came to a triumphant end at the home of his long-time friend, Judge Bassett, in Delaware.

As above indicated, the two bishops now traveled together, as they often did. It was not an accident that brought them into McKendree's territory. They had important business with him. For nearly ten years the work had been lagging in Kentucky and Tennessee,

and a man was needed who could rally and organize the forces for an aggressive campaign. That McKendree was the very man for the place, the bishops had no doubt. In the whole range of their acquaintance they knew no other one so competent to succeed poor Francis Poythress, over whose brilliant mind the veil of insanity was already beginning to fall. Whether the thought of changing fields had ever before entered McKendree's mind, we are not informed. But it did not take him long to reach a conclusion. He became convinced that the call of the bishops was an indication of Providence, and he accepted it without hesitation. Bishop McTyeire says of him: "He was accustomed to keep house in his saddlebags. It was said that he could pack more in them and in better order than other men. He therefore went at three hours' notice." Writing of the incident long afterwards, he himself said: "I was without money, books, or clothes. These were at a distance, and I had no time to go after them; but I was not in debt, therefore unembarrassed. Of money due me, I collected one hundred dollars, bought cloth for a coat, carried it to Holston, and left it with a tailor in the bounds of my new district. The bishops continued their course. My business was to look after them and wait on them, for they were both infirm old men." Asbury was only fifty-five and Whatcoat about sixty-five. The service which McKendree rendered his elder brethren then and often afterwards was nowise exacted, but was a free and glad courtesy. No man ever had a juster estimate of the value of gentlemanliness. Whenever opportunity offered he displayed it to others, and he was always

deeply touched when it was shown to him. Writing of a kind family that had entertained him in his earlier ministry, he says: "I am more and more convinced that good manners are an accomplishment next to grace." And by good manners he meant the kind of conduct that springs from a good and gentle heart.

McKendree was not utterly unacquainted with the border, but he had never lived in the interior of the West. He was now about to pass, therefore, into a new world and was to spend the greater part of his remaining days beyond the mountains. He was forty-three years old, in the very prime and glory of his manhood, strong of body, alert of mind, and fully consecrated to the work of preaching the gospel. Without reserve, he was ready to throw himself into the surging life of that great empire that was growing up in the Mississippi Valley. The man and the occasion were surely met—a mighty man and a great occasion. More than anybody could see at the time God was in it.

The three itinerants moved on through Southwest Virginia and East Tennessee, following for at least two hundred miles almost the present track of the Norfolk and Western and Southern Railways. At Liberty, the county seat of Bedford County, which they reached on September 14, they were met by a great and curious throng; and Asbury, though far from well, preached in the courthouse. Thanks to his Journal, it is possible for us to follow them from that point. Their way took them by Wytheville, then a pleasant village of twenty houses, Russell's old place near Seven Mile Ford, Abingdon (just beginning to show signs of growth), and thence past what is now Bristol to Edward Cox's, on

the Holston River and ten miles within the Tennessee line. Asbury had been welcomed in the home of that good Maryland Methodist when he first crossed the mountains twelve years before from the Carolinas, and he never afterwards missed a chance to enjoy its generous and refreshing entertainment. From Cox's, by a rather circuitous route, he and his friends made another stage of fifty-five or sixty miles to Van Pelt's, on Lick Creek, in Greene County. Here was another of his "homes." Van Pelt was a local preacher, an early pioneer from New York into that community. His hospitality knew no bounds, and he counted it one of the honors of his life to entertain these distinguished servants of the Lord.

Up to this point the bishops had ridden for the most part in an old chaise, while McKendree kept to the back of his horse. This chaise is elsewhere said to have cost originally thirty dollars; but it must have been of stout workmanship to stand the roads over which it was driven. Indeed, it did now and then break down and had to be propped and buttressed with strong saplings till it could be got to the next blacksmith shop. At Van Pelt's it was left behind, being totally unfit for the rest of the road. An extra horse was also borrowed of the kindly host; and after the delay of a few days, the final stage of the journey was begun.

Turning a little west of north, they rode first to Stubblefield's, near the line between Grainger and Hawkins Counties, where they attended a Quarterly Conference and preached. This leads me to say that they missed no opportunity to preach along their en-

tire way. That was their main business, and they had a perfect passion for it. About thirty-five or forty miles farther on was Cumberland Gap, to which all roads leading to the west converged. It is a natural depression in the mountains and was first discovered in 1748 by Dr. Thomas Walker and a company of Virginia explorers, who promptly named it, as well as the mountains themselves and the river beyond, after the Duke of Cumberland, who had then recently put down the Young Pretender at Culloden. From the Gap their way led on through the "wilderness" proper, a rough and lonely section, and the lovely blue-grass region, that American Arcadia, to Bethel Academy, on the Kentucky River, where the Conference was to meet.

The whole distance from Greenbrier to this point, including the detours, was not much, if any, less than four hundred and fifty miles and had consumed more than three weeks. The most of it was not new to Asbury. He had visited Kentucky at least thrice before, beginning in 1790. At that time also Whatcoat was his companion. They then reached the Gap by a direct route from General Russell's, passing down almost the whole length of Powell's Valley. The story of that earlier journey reads like a romance touched with tragedy. Eight armed men came across the mountains to meet them and escort them back. Eight others joined the company on the return. Of these sixteen men, thirteen carried guns and would have been able to give a good account of themselves in a fight. At every step they were in danger of assault from roving Indians. On the roadside they counted the graves of

twenty-four persons lately massacred. It took seven or eight days from the Gap to Lexington.

I have stood in the great Gap and have set my imagination to work to recall the pioneer days. Before my eyes have passed as in a mighty procession the hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children, defiling on foot or on horseback, or later still in covered wagons, through the friendly opening in search of new and better homes for themselves and their posterity, with brave Daniel Boone marching erect and steady at the head of the column; and I have been mightily stirred as I thought upon the significance of this racial movement. Once I was conversing about it with the brilliant young scholar (not so young now), Professor Turner, of the University of Wisconsin, when he suddenly turned on me with a lighted face and said: "I shall never be satisfied till I can go to Abingdon, in Virginia, and take the wilderness trace horseback to Lexington, Ky."

The pioneer preachers who moved here and there in the throng were animated by different motives from those which controlled the majority. They were not on the lookout for homes and lands. Their only desire was to reach and save the perishing thousands of their fellow creatures that were without other helpers in the way of life. Surely no motive could have been nobler. Little noticed as they were at the time, it is easy for us to see now that they did more to lay the broad bases of a Christian civilization in the struggling and ill-organized frontier communities than any other agency which was then at work.

As noticed above, ten years had elapsed since this

first visit of Asbury, and conditions were now in many respects much changed for the better. The Indians had been taught the folly of warring upon the whites and no longer lurked upon the trail. Here and there even in the wilderness were rough human habitations. Kentucky was never a Territory in the technical American sense of the term, but in 1792 was carved directly out of Virginia and admitted as a full-fledged State into the Federal Union, with a population of 73,000, which by the end of the century was almost quadrupled. In the central parts of the State signs of a settled life and even of coming wealth were distinctly visible. Nevertheless, let no one think that Asbury, Whatcoat, and McKendree had even now a smooth and easy way before them. Few men in our softer times could be found with courage to undertake their task. They reached Bethel Academy, in the bend of the Kentucky River, October 4, 1800.

As set out in previous chapters, Methodism was already established in Kentucky and Tennessee. Seventeen years before this time—that is, in 1783—Francis Clark, a local preacher from Virginia, in company with John Durham and other laymen, settled near Danville and organized themselves into a class; but no mention is made of them in the General Minutes. In 1786 the first two regular itinerants, James Haw and Benjamin Ogden, appointed from the Conference which met that year in Baltimore, appeared on the scene. They were men of uncommon parts and for several years did yeoman service, laying broad and secure foundations for their successors. There was no hardship that they did not endure and no danger that they did not encounter.

In the face of the most tremendous difficulties they showed a steady and persistent courage that reached and passed the level of heroism. Threading the narrow paths between settlements, they preached in the lonely cabins, in the rude blockhouses, and wherever else an audience could be gathered. They wore the coarsest clothes, ate the homeliest food, and slept either in beds that were far from tidiness and comfort or else under the open sky.

In the Conference itself, which met October 4-6, 1800, there was not much business; but there was worry enough on the outside over the affairs of Bethel Academy, which had been projected ten years before, but had never been a success, and had given Asbury almost as much concern as Cokesbury College. Leaving out the two bishops, only five preachers answered to their names at roll call. It is fitting that they should be mentioned here: William McKendree, William Burke, John Sale, Hezekiah Harriman, and Benjamin Lakin. Three others were readmitted: Lewis Hunt, Thomas Allen, and Jeremiah Lawson. Two were admitted on trial: William Marsh and Benjamin Young. Fourteen local preachers and four traveling preachers were ordained deacons.

The salaries of the preachers, which were only eighty dollars a year, all showed deficits. The most of these heroic men actually received less than fifty dollars each for their services. Without having formally assumed any vow of poverty, they were nearly as poor as the original disciples of Saint Francis of Assisi or as the Galilean fishermen who answered the call of the Lord. There was nothing that they dreaded more than being

suspected of mercenary motives. At all costs, they were determined to keep themselves free from that imputation. Their purpose was as noble as that of St. Paul when he labored with his own hands rather than be a burden to the Church; but they made a great blunder in failing to see that self-denial and self-sacrifice are virtues of which the ministry has no right to possess a monopoly. That "the laborer is worthy of his hire," and that "they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel," are facts which cannot be slurred over without harm and damage to all concerned. At this point in their early history the fathers of American Methodism ate sour grapes, and the children's teeth have been set on edge ever since. To the present day we are suffering from the noble but erroneous views of those who went before us.

The whole field west of the Alleghany Mountains was thrown by the bishops—really by Bishop Asbury, who took the lead in everything—into one district, and McKendree was set over it. It was as large as an empire, and included the whole States of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio, with a large part of Virginia, and missions soon to be established in Illinois, Mississippi and Missouri. The very magnitude of it was an appeal to the imagination, especially as there was now pouring into it a fresh and growing tide of immigrants from the older States. The district was divided into nine circuits, and these were supplied by fourteen men, the nine heretofore mentioned and besides them Henry Smith, Thomas Wilkerson, John Page, James Hunter, and John Watson. It was a small

corps, but a disciplined one, and it had a leader who was a host within himself.

During the greater part of the Conference Asbury was both sick and dejected. The routine affairs he kept in his hands, but left the most of the preaching to Whatcoat and McKendree. Indeed, on Sunday he did not venture out to the public services, being shut up in his own room by the rain. A note from his Journal is significant. He says: "It was strongly insisted upon by preachers and people that I should say something before I left Bethel. Able or unable, willing or unwilling, accordingly on Tuesday, in the Academical Hall, I gave a long and temperate talk upon Hebrews x. 38, 39." Others might preach with more force, but the people must hear the veteran, and even at the risk of putting too heavy a burden upon him they clamored to see him on the platform. I know what he meant when he said that his talk was "long," but am not quite certain what sense he attached to the word "temperate." It is probable, however, that, to use a phrase which I once heard from a colored preacher, he "held himself in."

No sooner was the Conference over than the unwearied itinerants were again moving. They had little time to lie by and rest. They were on the King's business, and that, as always, required haste. Leaving Bethel on Wednesday, October 8, they rode clean across the State of Kentucky, entering Tennessee on the 16th and reaching Nashville on the 19th. As showing what they encountered on the way, I condense from Asbury's Journal:

Wednesday, 8.—We rode fifteen miles to Shawnee Run, and crossed Kentucky River at Curd's Ferry. The river is as low as a stream, and the streams are nearly dried up.

Thursday, 9.—I preached on Hebrews iii. 12-14 at the new house at Shawnee Run. We had rich entertainment for man and beast at Robert Johnson's.

This "new house" was a church, one of the earliest in that part of the State. The "rich entertainment at Robert Johnson's" was a legitimate offset to the coarse and unpalatable food that they were often compelled to eat.

Friday, 10.—We rode to Pleasant Run to John Springer's. It was a very warm day for the season. I had a running blister at my side, yet I rode and walked thirty-two miles. We refreshed ourselves at Crawford's Tavern on the way. We have visited Knox, Madison, Mercer, and Washington Counties, in this State.

At Springer's they remained from Friday evening till Monday morning. On Sunday it rained so hard that the bishops were "shut up," but McKendree met the people and preached. It was a bad day when he failed to meet a waiting audience.

Monday, 13.—We left John Springer's and came to Lewis Thomas's, fifteen miles; a deep, damp, narrow path; the underwood very wet. Crossed Cartwright's and Hardin's Creeks. I gave a short sermon on Romans viii. 9: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

Thursday, 14.—We began our march for Cumberland. We were told by two persons that we could not cross the Rolling Fork of Salt River. I judged we could; and as I thought, so it was; we forded it with ease. We came up a solitary path east of the Level Woods and struck into the road to Lee's Ferry. Fourteen miles of the latter part of this day's journey we rode through barrens of hickory, shrub oak, and hazel. Thirty miles, if not thirty-five, is the amount of this

day's work. In the morning there was a very great damp, and in the afternoon it was, I thought, as warm as the west of Georgia.

Wednesday, 15.—We crossed Green River, the main branch of which riseth near the Crab Orchard. We crossed at the mouth of Little Barren River. We then rode a bold push for the Great Barren. Dining at Mr. Morrison's, I could not eat wallet provision; but happily for me, I was provided with a little fresh mutton at the house, made warm in a little space. Now we had unfavorable appearances of rain; we had bleak, barren hills to ride, which, although beautiful to sight, were painful to sense. The rain came in large and rapid drops for fourteen miles. We were well soaked on all sides. A little after dark we came to Mr. Hagin's, upon Big Barren River. A good house, an excellent fire to dry our clothing, good meat and milk for supper, and the cleanest beds—all we had. I have paid for this route.

Preaching on the 18th at the house of a Brother Parker, in Sumner County, Tenn., they were met by four local preachers (Brothers McGee, Suggs, Jones, and Speer) and had a season of great rejoicing. On the 19th they had their first view of the city of Nashville, which was founded by four hundred immigrants from the Watauga Settlement, in East Tennessee, under the leadership of James Robertson, in the winter of 1779-80, and, after an early history as full of romance and of tragedy as any community ever passed through, was now enjoying a peaceful and solid prosperity. The visitors found that the Methodists had erected a stone church on the public square, of which Asbury said: "If it were floored, ceiled, and glazed, it would be a noble house." Inside and outside of it a congregation of one thousand persons was gathered. Asbury, Whatcoat, and McKendree preached in suc-

cession. The service lasted three hours, but there is no record to the effect that anybody grew weary. That sort of preaching was not to be heard every day. I much doubt if any three men ever came to the town who brought it a greater blessing. Very appropriately, after the lapse of more than a hundred years, the Methodists of the city are just now (1913) setting up a marker and tablet on the spot where the "noble" stone house, without floor or ceiling or glazing, stood. It is strange that the thing has not been done before.

On the next day, by special invitation no doubt, the three visitors attended "a sacramental solemnity" which had been in progress for four days at Drake's Creek Meetinghouse, some ten or fifteen miles distant, under the care of Rev. Messrs. Hodge, Rankin, McGee, Adair, and Craighead, of the Presbyterian Church, and preached, not controversially, but still in downright Methodist fashion. They got good and gave good, and such fair exchange as that is not robbery. "The Great Revival" had fairly begun in Middle Tennessee and Southern Kentucky. McKendree lighted his torch afresh at this Calvinistic altar and shook the glowing sparks wherever he went. Another extract from Asbury's journal is certainly not out of place:

Tuesday, October 21.—Yesterday, and especially during the night, were witnessed scenes of deep interest. In the intervals between preaching the people refreshed themselves and horses and returned upon the ground. The stand was in the open air, embosomed in a wood of lofty beech trees. The ministers of God, Methodists and Presbyterians, united their labors and mingled with the childlike simplicity of primitive times. Fires blazing here and there dispelled the dark-

ness, and the shouts of the redeemed captives and the cries of precious souls struggling into life broke the silence of midnight. The weather was delightful, as if Heaven smiled, while mercy flowed in abundant streams of salvation. We suppose that there were at least thirty souls converted at this meeting. I rejoice that God is visiting the sons of the Puritans, who are candid enough to acknowledge their obligation to the Methodists.

Not pausing longer than was necessary in the vicinity of Nashville, Asbury and Whatcoat, still accompanied by McKendree, pursued their round across the Cumberland Mountains, passing the Crab Orchard (to be distinguished from the Kentucky settlement of the same name) and what is now Kingston, and reached Knoxville on November 1, a journey of more than two hundred miles over difficult and dangerous roads. At this point the bishops parted from McKendree, they to go forward through the valley of the French Broad into the Carolinas and he to return to the duties of his district in Kentucky.

In the foregoing chapter I have dwelt somewhat at length on details of travel to give the reader a clear conception of the manner and order of the life which McKendree and his associates led in the prosecution of their high calling. Except, therefore, when I follow them into entirely new fields, it will not be necessary for me hereafter to be so full in my account of their movements.

CHAPTER VIII.

Taking a Fresh Start in Kentucky.

It is rather a remarkable fact, as before intimated, that from 1792 to 1800 Methodism made no visible progress in Kentucky and, in truth, scarcely held its own. At the former date it had 1,808 members; at the latter, only 1,740, and this in spite of the other fact that the population of the State had increased during the same period from 73,000 to 264,303 souls.

There must be some good reason or reasons for this sudden arrest of growth. It cannot be attributed to the incompetency or unfaithfulness of the preachers. Many of them were men of great ability and fine character. Merely to call the roll of their names is to verify this assertion. Besides Haw and Ogden, already mentioned, there were Thomas Williamson, Wilson Lee, Francis Poythress, Barnabas McHenry, Peter Massie, John Page, Benjamin Northcutt, John Ray, William Burke, Jacob Lurton, John Kobler, Thomas Wilkerson, James Ward, and Henry Birchett. These were the very flower of the itinerant army.

Neither can we find a satisfactory explanation of the state of affairs under notice in the statement, which is no doubt true, that great numbers of Methodists moved on farther west; for more were doubtless coming in all the time than were going out. The gains from immigration ought to have been at least as large as the losses from emigration.

But the very newness of social conditions made re-

ligious work increasingly difficult. The people had all been uprooted from their old, familiar surroundings and set down in the midst of strange environments. The natural tendency of such a change was to relax the moral and religious restraints to which they had been accustomed in their former homes. When the beaten tracks of life were gone, the people followed the devices and desires of their own hearts. Left largely free from outward constraints, they also cast off the authority of God. Everything about them was unsettled. For the first thirty years of her existence Kentucky was never free from wars and rumors of wars. No man could tell at just what hour it would be necessary for him to fight for his own life and the lives of his wife and children. Then, too, the whole population was fermenting with the eager desire to get large bodies of the best lands. The rude surveys often crossed and recrossed one another. In some sections titles were three deep. All this bred innumerable conflicts of interest and stirred up envies, jealousies, hatreds, and all manner of uncharitableness.

The mass of the immigrants were good specimens of the Scotch and English races. No new State ever had better, but they suffered a certain deterioration from the causes I have mentioned. Worse still, there was a considerable element of floaters who had drifted in on the top of the tide and had no thought of settling down to the hard and steady tasks of good citizenship. These were gamblers, drunkards, thieves, and loose livers from the older communities. Whisky was plentiful and cheap and the use of it very general.

In its train came, as always, a long line of associated evils.

At a very early day, moreover, French infidelity became widely spread throughout the trans-Alleghany settlements. At the close of our Revolutionary War everything French was popular in America. It became a sort of fad among the hunters and trappers of the West to profess admiration for Voltaire and Rousseau, and contempt for all the tenets and usages of religion. Just how this spirit of skepticism managed to propagate itself, it would be difficult to say. But somehow or other it got into the air, percolated through all classes of society, and made converts in every quarter. It was a strange spectacle, that of the uncultured and self-assertive descendants of Scotch Covenanters and English Puritans following the lead of teachers whose delight it was to deny and denounce all the beliefs that the ages had consecrated.

Dr. Redford insists that the action of the Methodists in taking up an open antagonism to slavery also kept a large number of intelligent and well-disposed people from joining them. There may be something in that view, but I am not disposed to consider it as carrying much weight.

After all, it seems to me that the course of Haw and Ogden in going after James O'Kelly put greater obstacles in the way of the Church than all the things that I have mentioned. As pioneers their influence was great, and they threw it all against the cause which they had so vigorously supported and defended. At a later date Ogden repented of his folly, was readmitted into the itinerancy, and died in good repute. But Haw

was not a man to turn backward. When his prejudices were once aroused, he became a bitter and unyielding partisan. He had probably known and admired O'Kelly in Virginia and was ready to listen to whatever his old friend might have to say. At any rate, when the great schismatic broke away after the General Conference of 1792 and undertook to set up a new Church patterned after his own notions, Haw, who had already located on account of his failing health, followed him heart and soul. The infection of O'Kellyism got into his very blood and disturbed and perverted all his judgments. His violence against Episcopal Methodism and its adherents passed all the bounds of propriety. He did not now hesitate to denounce even Bishop Asbury, whom he had long loved and honored, as a base seeker after power and money.

At the time Haw was living in Sumner County, Tenn., not far from the Kentucky line. He was so popular that his neighbors had made him a present of six hundred and forty acres of good land just for the sake of keeping him among them. For a while it looked as if he would lead them all after him in his defection from the Church. Indeed, he did draw off all the traveling and local preachers except sturdy James Gwin, who had a way of putting his foot down and refusing to take it up except for a good reason. The congregations too were greatly disturbed.

What the results would have been if Providence had not intervened, it is difficult to say. But it came to pass that in 1795 William Burke was sent to the Cumberland Circuit. He was surely the man for the

hour. Steady in his convictions, an able debater and an eloquent preacher, and, withal, a man of the rarest tact, he met Haw and beat him on his own field. Through his influence the great majority of Methodists returned to the fold, leaving only a scattered few to support the cause of the schismatics. In Central and Northern Kentucky, however, the plague worked with varying energy for a good while longer, and, as I have said, did an amount of damage that cannot be overstated.

But as the century grew old there were signs of better times. Isolated revivals of religion broke out here and there, harbingers of that great outpouring of the Spirit which began in 1799 and spread over the whole country. So much has been written concerning it that it is almost unnecessary to dwell long upon it in this connection, but I cannot forbear a few paragraphs in addition to what I have before said. The chief human instrumentalities in the origin of the movement were the two brothers, Revs. John and William McGee, the one a Methodist and the other a Presbyterian, who emigrated from North Carolina to Sumner County, Tenn., in 1797. In spite of their deep doctrinal differences they were true yokefellows in the gospel. Starting out in 1799 for a preaching tour through the country between their homes and the Ohio River, they made their first stop at a sacramental meeting in the church of the Rev. Mr. McGrady, on Red River, Logan County, Ky. Two other Presbyterian ministers, Hodge and Rankin, were also present as visitors. Out of abundant courtesy John McGee, the only Methodist in the company, was asked to preach

first. He was followed in order by the rest. All spoke with much liberty and animation. Though there was deep feeling in the congregation from day to day, there was no remarkable stir until Monday morning, when, under the preaching of Mr. Hodge, "a lady obtained an uncommon blessing and began to shout the praises of God." This was a little too much for Messrs. McGrady, Hodge, and Rankin. It infringed on their sense of propriety, and they presently left the house. But the two brothers McGee remained and carried on the service, the people also staying in their seats. John McGee had been appointed to follow Mr. Hodge with a sermon, but the power of God so overcame him that he could only exhort. The result was amazing. Everybody in the audience was affected. The floor was speedily covered with men and women crying for mercy. Many found forgiveness and many others went away in agony of spirit, praying for the great gift.

The next gathering was on Muddy River, about three miles from Russellville, in the same county. There a new thing happened. A number of people loaded up their wagons with provisions enough to last for several days, as well as with ample bed clothing, and drove to the meeting place and camped on the grounds. This was the real beginning of camp meetings, which for the next half century played so important a part in the Methodist economy. McGee in a letter written June 23, 1820, enumerates all the above facts and says that "the Lord was present and approved of their zeal by sealing a pardon to about forty souls."

The news of such strange occurrences spread fast

through the settlements; and when a regular camp meeting was appointed a little later at a place just south of the Cumberland Ridge, ten miles east of Gallatin, Tenn., there was "an increase of people and carriages of different descriptions." A great many Presbyterian and Methodist preachers were present, but only a few Baptists. It is better to let McGee speak again. He says: "Preaching commenced and the people prayed, and the power of God attended. There was a great cry for mercy. The nights were truly awful; the camp ground was well illuminated; the people were differently exercised all over the ground, some exhorting, some shouting, some praying, and some crying for mercy, while others lay as dead men on the ground. Some of the spiritually wounded fled to the woods, and their groans could be heard all through the surrounding groves as the groans of dying men. From thence many came into the camp, rejoicing and praising God for having found redemption in the blood of the Lamb. At this meeting it was computed that one hundred souls were converted from nature to grace. But perhaps the greatest meeting we ever witnessed in this country took place shortly after on Desha's Creek, near the Cumberland River. Many thousands of people attended. The mighty power and mercy of God were manifested. The people fell before the word like corn before a storm of wind, and many rose from the dust with divine glory shining in their countenances and gave glory to God in such strains as made the hearts of stubborn sinners to tremble; and after the first gust of praise they would break forth in volleys of exhortation."

In a preceding chapter we have noticed that Asbury, Whatcoat, and McKendree on the day following their first arrival at Nashville went to a meeting of similar character at the Presbyterian church on Drake's Creek and were greatly impressed with what they saw and heard. It need not surprise us, therefore, to learn that when McKendree again reached Kentucky via the Cumberland Mountains and Knoxville he brought the gracious tidings with him and spread them far and wide. It was partly, at least, due to his influence that the fire began to burn at various places in that region. He came at a good time and measured up to all the opportunities that were set before him. The temporary "union" which the Presbyterians and Methodists effected at the beginning of the revival could not, of course, be permanent. The two Churches had come together under the impulse of the Spirit to accomplish a great and definite end. Nothing could have been more Christlike than the attitude which they displayed toward each other. But each Church had some highly prized peculiarities of doctrine and usage which it did not care to surrender and which, indeed, it could not have surrendered without losing something of its efficiency. Through McKendree's wise and godly management the Methodists did their full share of the labor in the revival itself, and also came out of it with the perfect good will of their fellow Christians, their polity intact and in full working order.

From that time forward Methodism had an almost unbroken career of success in evangelizing the West. It is impossible to read the mighty narrative of its achievements without reaching the conclusion that

McKendree, more perhaps than any other one man, contributed to the aggregate result. He had almost unlimited physical strength and endurance. No journey was too long nor too hard for him to undertake when it seemed necessary. For several years he lived more in the saddle than anywhere else. Wherever he went he was at once recognized as a new force. His preaching was of the highest order. Men were frequently heard to say after listening to him: "Did you ever hear the like?" Several of his brethren who had preceded him perhaps equaled him in particular respects, but not one of them was a match for him on the whole ground. As an organizer he was without a peer. Not even Mr. Wesley himself had a clearer realization of the fact that organization is necessary to conserve the results of a religious upheaval. Itinerant ministers being all too scarce, he hunted up and put to work every available local preacher, and in this way brought out a good many worthy men who afterwards became conspicuously useful in the regular ranks. Not content to hold the ground already gained, he created new circuits wherever he could discover an opening for them. Instead of standing on the defensive, he acted upon the belief that the only safe course for the Church is to make incessant warfare upon Satan and his kingdom. His wisdom was justified by the results. Not only in Kentucky and Tennessee, but beyond the Ohio and the Mississippi, the cause took on new life and flourished as never before.

As noticed on a previous page, McKendree left Asbury at Knoxville in November, 1800, and returned to Kentucky, passing through Cumberland Gap and tak-

ing his old route thence to the Blue Grass region. Through the year that followed he was perhaps the busiest man in all that quarter. In fact, when the Conference met October 31, 1801, at Felix Earnest's, on the Nollichucky River, Greene County, Tenn., neither he nor the preachers under him were present. Asbury's journal says: "Our brethren in Kentucky did not attend; they pleaded the greatness of the work of God." How great it was may be gathered from this, that at the next Conference, held at Strother's, Sumner County, Tenn., October 2, 1802, it was found necessary to divide McKendree's district into three—Holston, Cumberland, and Kentucky. He retained Kentucky. The Conference itself was full of interest. It appeared from the reports of the preachers that during the year there had been great gains in the membership. Everybody was hopeful. Asbury himself was quite sick, but stuck to his task. The record in his journal is very brief: "My stomach and speech were pretty well gone. I applied to Mr. William Hodges and Mr. William McGee, Presbyterian ministers, to supply my lack of public service, which they did with great fervency and fidelity. With great pleasure and in great pain I heard them both. I was able to ordain, by employing Brother McKendree to examine those who were presented, and to station the preachers, I hope, for the glory of God, the benefit of the people, and the advantage of the preachers."

McKendree's service to Asbury did not stop with the session of the Conference. The two again became traveling companions across the Cumberland Mountains and through Eastern Tennessee for more than

two hundred miles. Asbury's journal tells the story very simply. Here is a brief extract from it: "Brother McKendree made me a tent of his own and John Watson's blankets and happily saved me from taking cold while I slept about two hours under my grand marquee." And here is another: "I have been sick for twenty-three days. O the tale of woe I might relate! My dear McKendree had to lift me up and down from my horse like a helpless child."

Leaving the venerable Bishop on November 8, McKendree turned back once more to his district, now somewhat circumscribed, but still as large as an empire. During the year that followed things moved forward at a great rate. The work showed such signs of enlargement that from the Conference which met at Mt. Gerizim, Harrison County, Ky., October 2, 1803, Bishop Asbury found it necessary to send William Burke as presiding elder to form a new district northwest of the Ohio River. The statistics also tell a wonderful story of progress.

It was understood that McKendree would go to the General Conference which was to meet in Baltimore in May, 1804, and he received some money to assist in paying the expense of the trip. But at the last moment he concluded that he ought not to absent himself for so long a time from the active duties of the field, and so turned over the expense money to William Burke and stayed in his district. In October, 1804, Conference again met at Mt. Gerizim. Bishop Asbury having taken sick on the way thither, neither he nor Bishop Whatcoat, who accompanied him, was able to attend the session. In the absence of the two

Bishops McKendree was elected President, and admirably performed all the duties of the episcopal office except the ordination of the deacons and elders.

At the Conference of 1805, which met in Scott County, Ky., and over which Bishop Asbury presided, McKendree was removed from the Kentucky to the Cumberland District, including all of Middle and West Tennessee, also Mississippi on the south and Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri on the west. In apparent violation of the rule adopted in 1792, he had already served five years on the former district. Why this irregularity had been allowed by men who were sticklers for the Discipline I cannot imagine, and Bishop Paine professes himself unable to explain it.

From that time on to the end of his life McKendree became an adopted son of Tennessee. His father and other relatives removed thither from Virginia in 1810, and with them he made his home, as far as such a traveler could be said to have a home. The place of their residence was about twenty-five or thirty miles distant from Nashville. In that city the Bishop had many devoted friends who counted it always an honor to receive him as a guest. After a lapse of more than eighty years, memories of him are still in the air.

The place of holding the Western Conference was shifted in 1806 back to Ebenezer Church, Greene County, East Tennessee, where it convened on September 20. By all tokens it was a good session. There was preaching morning, noon, and night. On Sunday Asbury and McKendree both preached from a stand in the woods, and at least two thousand people were in the audience. The Mississippi preachers did

not think they could be spared from their circuits and did not come. Asbury's journal has an exultant note: "There are fourteen hundred added within the bounds of this Conference, fifty-five preachers stationed, *all pleased.*" This latter fact is so remarkable that it deserves to be italicized. Another entry shows the heroic quality of the men and the tenderness of the Bishop: "The brethren were in want and could not provide clothes for themselves. So I parted with my watch and my coat and my shirt." No wonder that they followed his leadership.

The year 1807 was one of great labor and privation with McKendree. We have seen that both Illinois and Missouri were included in his district. Jesse Walker had been sent to the former and John Travis to the latter to get the lay of the land and map out new circuits. Two better men for such an enterprise could not easily have been found. They rejoiced in holding posts on the front line. Difficulties did not discourage them nor dangers frighten them. Walker, in particular, was the Daniel Boone of Methodism. But they needed the help of an experienced and competent elder. So McKendree determined to visit them. Fortunately an account of the trip written by James Gwin, who shared it with him, has been preserved. It is so illuminative of times and conditions that, though it has often been published, I venture to reproduce a considerable portion of it here:

In the year 1807 Brother McKendree, A. Goddard, and myself set out to visit the settlements of Illinois. We crossed the Ohio River, took the wilderness, and traveled until night. Not being able to get to any habitation, we camped out.

Brother McKendree made us some tea, and we lay down under the branches of a friendly beech and had a pleasant night's rest. Next morning we set out early, traveled hard, and got some distance into the prairie, and here we took up for the night. This was a night of trouble. After we had taken a morsel to eat and offered up our prayers to God, we lay down to rest and fell into a deep sleep. About eleven o'clock Brother McKendree awoke and found that our horses were all gone. After some search we found that they had passed over a small stream and had taken back the way we had come. Not knowing whether they had been stolen or had left of their own accord, leaving Brother McKendree at our camp, Brother Goddard and myself went in pursuit of them. As the night was dark, we got dry bark, which afforded us a tolerable light. We followed their tracks across the prairie and overtook them about eight o'clock the next morning, having traveled fifteen miles on foot. The next night we reached the first settlement. We tarried a day there. Crossing Kaskaskia River, we reached Turkey Hill and lodged with an old Brother Scott. Here we met with Jesse Walker, who had formed a circuit and had three camp meetings appointed for us. After resting a few days, we set out for the first camp meeting. In twelve miles we reached the Mississippi. Having no means of taking our horses across, we sent them back, crossed the river, and, with our baggage on our shoulders, went to the camp ground, having fallen in with Brother Travis on the way. About forty were converted at this meeting.

From this camp meeting we returned across the river to Judge S.'s, who refreshed us and sent forward our baggage in a cart to Brother Garrettson's, where our next meeting was to be held, which was called Three Springs. We arrived on Friday morning on the camp ground, which was situated in a beautiful grove surrounded by a prairie. A considerable congregation had collected, for the news of the other meetings had gone abroad and produced much excitement. Some were in favor of the work, and others were opposed to it. A certain Major had raised a "company of lewd fellows of the baser sort" to drive us from the ground. On Saturday, while

I was preaching, the Major and his company rode into the congregation and halted, which produced considerable confusion and alarm. I stopped preaching for a moment and quite calmly invited them to be off with themselves, and they retired to the spring for a fresh drink of brandy. The Major said that he had heard of these Methodists before; that they always broke up the peace of the people wherever they went; that they preached against horse-racing, card-playing, and every other kind of amusement. However, they used no violence against us, but determined to camp on the ground and prevent us from doing harm. But at three o'clock, while Brother Goddard and I were singing a hymn, an awful sense of the divine power fell on the congregation. Victory was on the Lord's side. Many were converted, and by sunrise the next morning there was the shout of a king in the camp. It was Sabbath morning, and I thought it the most beautiful morning I had ever seen. At eleven o'clock Brother McKendree administered the holy sacrament; and while he was dwelling upon its origin, nature, and design, some of the Major's company were affected, and we had a melting time. After sacrament, Brother McKendree preached to a large congregation, all the principal men of the country and all in reach who could get there being present. His text was, "Come, let us reason together," and perhaps no man ever managed the subject better or with more effect. His reasoning on the atonement, the great plan of salvation, and the love of God was so clear and strong and was delivered with such pathos that the congregation involuntarily arose to their feet and pressed toward him from all parts. While he was preaching he very ingeniously adverted to the conduct of the Major, and remarked: "We are Americans, and some of us have fought for our liberty and have come here to teach men the way to heaven." This seemed to strike the Major, and he afterwards became friendly, and has remained so ever since.

We went next to Goshen camp meeting. Here we had comfortable camps and an arbor in the form of an "L" large enough to shelter seven hundred persons. The stand was in an unsheltered spot, between the two squares. We had also

a small log meetinghouse, in which our first quarterly meeting was held. Preaching began on Friday and was kept up regularly. The people, having heard of the revival at the other meetings, flocked out in great numbers, many to see the strange work. Some brought brandy and cards for their amusement during the meeting. On Friday and Saturday the word preached seemed to do little good. An awful cloud seemed to rest upon us. In passing the door of the preacher's tent I saw Brother McKendree alone, bathed in tears. I stepped in, and he said to me: "Brother, we have been preaching for ourselves and not for the Lord. Go, brother, and preach Christ crucified to the people." My heart was deeply affected. We fell upon our knees and implored the help of God. This was about sunset. I preached at candle-lighting. My text was: "Behold the man!" It commenced raining shortly after I began to preach; and as the audience was under shelter, I did not stop, although exposed to the rain. My heart was fired and my tongue loosened in an unusual manner. For a few moments nothing but sobs and sighs were heard among the people. At length the whole congregation seemed suddenly smitten with the power of God. Many fell as in battle, and were presently raised to tell of pardoning mercy and encourage others to seek the Lord. We continued all night in the work. On the next day (Sunday), at nine o'clock A.M., the Lord's Supper was administered. It was a memorable day, and eternity only will reveal the result. On Monday, the last day of the meeting, *one hundred joined the Church.*

McKendree also gives a concise account of this visitation and adds some interesting facts. The first camp meeting mentioned, being beyond the Mississippi River, was in Missouri and the first ever held in that State. In getting to it the preachers walked about forty miles and carried their saddlebags. McKendree further states: "Four Sabbaths excepted, I have attended popular meetings ever since February, in which

time I have ridden about 2,700 miles through the wilderness to Illinois and back, spent considerable time in the most sickly part of that and this country, and yet, blessed be God! my health and strength have been preserved."

Up to this time no Conference had been held in the State of Ohio; but the population of the State, which is now and for a long time has been dominantly Methodistic, was increasing so rapidly, and the Church was showing such signs of life and growth, that everybody felt that there ought to be a gathering of the itinerants somewhere within its bounds. It was an eventful day, that 14th of September, 1807, when they convened in Chillicothe. Asbury, as usual, chronicles the chief incidents: "On Monday we opened our Conference in great peace and love and continued until Friday. A delegation of seven members was chosen to the General Conference. There were thirteen preachers added, and we found an addition of 2,200 members to the society in these bounds. Seven deacons were elected and ordained and ten elders. Only two preachers located. Sixty-five were stationed."

As the General Conference was not yet a delegated body, the election of seven delegates was purely a voluntary matter. The distance to Baltimore was so great and the traveling so costly that most of the preachers could not avail themselves of their right to seats in the chief synod of the Church; and they, therefore, wisely agreed to choose seven men who could fitly represent them. Of these seven, only five made an appearance when the roll was called in May, 1808. William McKendree very naturally headed the

list. The other four were William Burke, John Sale, Benjamin Lakin, and Elisha W. Bowman—a goodly company.

McKendree was no doubt returned from the Conference to the Cumberland District; but as the General Minutes were not published till after his election to the episcopacy in the following spring, the name of John Ward, who succeeded him, is put down in that place. As this year closes the labors of McKendree as a presiding elder, it is well to note the progress that had been made in the Western Conference since he took charge of the only district which it contained in 1800. Then there were 1,741 members; now there are 16,887. The one district had become five, and the fourteen preachers had become sixty-six. This enlargement, too, was not spasmodic, but normal and healthy. Wise men could see in it the promise of yet greater things. The Church was fairly intrenched, and nothing short of a great moral catastrophe could dislodge it.

CHAPTER IX.

Elected to the Episcopacy.

I have pointed out in a preceding chapter the fact that McKendree had voluntarily remained away from the General Conference of 1804. Still he was not a novice in the matter of ecclesiastical legislation; for he had been a member of the Conferences of 1792, 1796, and 1800, and in the last-mentioned body had taken some considerable part. But he was now in every sense of the term a more capable man than he had been on any of the former occasions. His eight years of responsible leadership in the West had brought him not only an increased depth of religious experience, but also a wide vision of the wants of the Church. Those who knew him intimately knew that he would make his mark in the deliberations and discussions of the body; but few, if any, were quite prepared to see him take the very highest rank among his brethren.

On the Sunday before the Conference began he was appointed to preach in the Light Street Church. A great many of the delegates had already arrived in the city and were present to hear his sermon. It is authentically known that he was reluctant to undertake the service. When he stood up in the pulpit, his appearance was far from reassuring. He was not arrayed in a distinctly clerical garb. His clothes were of coarse cloth and lacked much of fitting him. The bottom of his vest barely reached the top of his trousers, and when he grew animated his red flannel shirt

became distinctly visible. Nor were matters improved when he announced his hymn and began his opening prayer. Nathan Bangs, who was in the audience, looked on him with rather a critical eye as "an awkward backwoodsman," and writes that "he seemed to falter in his speech, clipping some of his words at the end and occasionally hanging upon a syllable as if it were difficult for him to pronounce the word." His text was Jeremiah viii. 21, 22: "For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me. Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" Dr. Bangs further adds:

> His introduction appeared tame, his sentences broken and disjointed, and his elocution very defective. He at length introduced his main subject, which was to show the spiritual disease of the Jewish Church and of the human family generally. And then he entered upon his second proposition, which was to analyze the feelings which such a state of things awakened in the souls of God's faithful ambassadors. But when he came to speak of the blessed effects upon the heart of the balm which God had prepared for the healing of the nations, he seemed to enter fully into the element in which his soul delighted to move and have its being, and he soon carried the whole congregation away with him into the regions of experimental religion.
>
> Remarking upon the objections which some would make to the expression of the feelings realized by a person fully restored to health by an application of the "sovereign balm for every wound," he referred to the shouts of applause so often heard upon our national jubilee in commemoration of our emancipation from political thralldom, and then said: "How much more cause has an immortal soul to rejoice and give glory to God for its spiritual deliverance from the bondage

of sin!" This was spoken with a soul overflowing with the most hallowed and exalted feelings and with an emphasis that was like the sudden bursting of a cloud surcharged with water. The congregation was instantly overwhelmed with a shower of divine grace from the upper world. At first sudden shrieks, as of persons in distress, were heard in different parts of the house, then shouts of praise, and in every direction sobs and groans. The eyes of the people overflowed with tears, while many were prostrated upon the floor or lay helpless on the seats. A very large, athletic-looking preacher, sitting by my side, suddenly fell upon his seat as if pierced by a bullet, and I felt my heart melting under emotions which I could not resist.

After this sudden shower the clouds were dispersed, and the Sun of Righteousness shone out most serenely and delightfully, producing upon all a present consciousness of the divine approbation. When the preacher descended from the pulpit, all were filled with admiration of his talents and were ready to "magnify the grace of God in him," as a chosen messenger of good tidings to the lost, saying in their hearts: *"This is the man whom God delights to honor."*

It is proper at this point to let McKendree's best and fullest biographer speak:

With the exception of Mr. Asbury, no preacher in the connection combined so many qualifications for the office of bishop as did McKendree. His piety was deep and uniform. He was single-hearted, magnanimous, generous, and of most refined and exquisite sensibility. With the discipline and government of the Church he was thoroughly acquainted, probably more familiar with ecclesiastical law than any of his contemporaries. As a preacher he was inferior to none in the clear comprehension and able advocacy of doctrines, in lucid and natural descriptions of religious emotions, and in close and searching application of Christian ethics to their practical developments in the daily walks of life, while in the power and effectiveness of his ministrations he stood as a prince among his brethren. Nor was there any rudeness in

his manners. He had enjoyed the benefit of highly cultivated society in the Old Dominion—was acquainted with the courtesies of social life. And without sacrificing the simplicity of his character, there was something in his manners which won the esteem of all with whom he came in contact and impressed them with the conviction that, while he was a true gentleman, he was also a true and noble specimen of the Christian minister. His fine personal appearance—about six feet tall, exquisitely proportioned—his beaming, prominent, mild, dark eyes, black hair, delicate white skin, and noble Grecian contour of face and forehead were remarkably prepossessing. His voice was clear, soft, and highly musical. And when, in his happiest moments in the pulpit, I have looked into his face, all radiant with intellect and smiling in every feature with the reflected piety and benignity of his full and happy soul, and listened to the accents of that most lute-like and persuasive voice, I have thought that I never heard such a voice or so felt the charm of truth and the attractions of piety. The *whole man* seemed to speak. And then there was associated with the words he uttered his long, self-sacrificing career, his unsuspected purity of life, his unmurmuring submission to hardships for the purpose of preaching Christ, and his daily exemplification of the power and loveliness of pure religion.

Bishop Asbury was present and was heard to say, "That sermon will make him a bishop," and his prediction proved true. Bishop Whatcoat, much beloved by everybody, had died on July 5, 1806, at the residence of his friend, Judge Bassett, at Dover, Dela., in the seventy-second year of his age; and it was necessary that at least one new bishop should be chosen. Ezekiel Cooper wanted seven, one for each Conference. Others were much in favor of two or more. But the Conference by a decided vote determined on one only. On the 12th of May, by a vote of ninety-five

out of one hundred and twenty-eight, McKendree was chosen, and on the 18th was ordained by Bishop Asbury, assisted by Jesse Lee, Freeborn Garrettson, Thomas Ware, and Philip Bruce. He was the first native American to be so honored, and until the coming of Joshua Soule was undoubtedly the greatest man to occupy the office.

Coke was in South Wales when he heard the news of McKendree's election, and wrote him the following characteristic letter of date October 5, 1808:

To Bishop McKendree:

I write to you, my very dear brother and friend, not to congratulate you on your election to the office of bishop (for I believe you regard not office nor honor any further than you may serve God thereby), but to express my regard for you and the pleasure I feel (notwithstanding what I have written above) at your being united to my old and venerable brother, Asbury, in the great work in which he is engaged. I am persuaded that God has chosen you to help my dear brother and that you will go on with him in perfect union in blessing the American Continent under divine grace.

You are mild; you are moderately and properly reserved and do not aim at an overbearing exercise of power. I have not had a large acquaintance with you; but your person and your voice are as fresh to me as if you were now with me in the same room, and I greatly mistake if I do not taste your spirit. Go on, brother, walking with God and united to him. Your field of action is great. You have, perhaps, ten thousand pulpits open to you. But the grand point which must be engraved continually on your forehead, as it were, and *on your heart* is the harmony and union of the Methodist Connection in America. God bless you! My dearest wife joins me in love to you. Pray for us.

This General Conference of 1808 was epochal in many respects, chiefly in this: that it framed and

enacted the written constitution under which the Church has since lived. Up to that time these quadrennial assemblies were simply mass conventions of the whole body of traveling ministers, with full and unrestricted authority to take any action that might seem proper. They could by a mere majority vote alter or abolish the Discipline or change the doctrines of the Church. The fact that they had not as yet undertaken to adopt any such radical measures was no guaranty that they would not do so in the future. The stability of the Church and its institutions could not wisely be allowed to depend on the varying judgment of a mere popular assembly, especially when it was certain that this assembly would be made up in large measure from the few central Conferences that were close to Baltimore.

It is not strange, therefore, that the New York, New England, Western, and Southern Conferences should have sent up a memorial embodying the following statement: "We are deeply impressed with the thorough conviction that a representative or delegated General Conference, composed of a specific number on principles of equal representation from the Annual Conferences, would be much more conducive to the prosperity and general unity of the whole body than the present indefinite and numerous body of ministers collected together unequally from the various Conferences, to the great inconvenience of the ministry and damage of the work of God."

This memorial was presented on May 9, three days after the General Conference had assembled. On the next day a motion was introduced by Stephen G. Ros-

zell, of the Baltimore Conference, and William Burke, of the Western Conference, to the effect that a committee be appointed "to draw up such regulations as they may think best to regulate the General Conference." Bishop Asbury, who was greatly in favor of the proposed action, interposed with another motion to the effect "that the committee be formed of an equal number from each of the Annual Conferences." Up to that time the bishops, of course, had the same right to take part in the deliberations of the Conference as the other preachers. In his admirable "Constitutional History" Bishop Tigert says: "This motion of Bishop Asbury was excellent parliamentary tactics, for it insured to the memorialists a majority of the committee for which they asked. Had the committee been miscellaneously selected, the character of the plan brought in for the action of the Conference would have been very doubtful." The motion of Asbury prevailed, and it was later determined that the committee should be composed of two members from each of the Annual Conferences: Ezekiel Cooper and John Wilson, from the New York; George Pickering and Joshua Soule, from the New England; William McKendree and William Burke, from the Western; William Phœbus and Josiah Randle, from the South Carolina; Philip Bruce and Jesse Lee, from the Virginia; Stephen G. Roszell and Nelson Reed, from the Baltimore; and John McClaskey and Thomas Ware, from the Philadelphia Conference. These were all picked men and competent, if anybody was, to handle the matter under consideration.

At its first session this committee, after conversing

largely on the whole subject, appointed a subcommittee of three—Cooper, Soule, and Bruce—to mature and bring in a plan for consideration; and this subcommittee on meeting determined that each one of the three should write out his own views and present them the next day. When the day came, both Soule and Cooper had their papers ready, but Bruce had written nothing. After considerable debate, Bruce agreed with Soule, and Cooper finally yielded to them, but not till he had warmly advocated his own views. The main point of difference touched what is now the third restrictive rule. Cooper's suggestion ran in these words: "They shall not do away with episcopacy, nor reduce our ministry to a Presbyterial parity." This was open to the objection that it did not define the sort of episcopacy it was intended to protect. Soule, on the other hand, insisted on this language: "The General Conference shall not change or alter any part of our government, so as to do away with episcopacy or destroy the plan of our itinerant general superintendency." Under this provision any attempt to create a diocesan episcopacy or to alter any essential feature of the then existing general superintendency would, of course, be an infraction of the constitution, a fact which Cooper and all concerned very well knew. It was a specific form of episcopacy that Soule wanted to guard.

The report of the subcommittee was accepted by the whole committee and on the morning of the 16th was presented to the General Conference. Its importance justifies its reproduction here:

1. The General Conference shall be composed of delegates from the Annual Conferences.

2. The delegates shall be chosen by ballot, without debate, in the Annual Conferences respectively, in the last meeting of the Conference previous to the meeting of the General Conference.

3. Each Annual Conference respectively shall have a right to send seven elders, members of their Conference, as delegates to the General Conference.

4. Each Annual Conference shall have a right to send one delegate, in addition to the seven, for every ten members belonging to such Conference over and above fifty—so that if there be sixty members, they shall send eight; if seventy, they shall send nine; and so on in proportion.

5. The General Conference shall meet on the first day of May, in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and twelve, and thenceforward on the first day of May once in four years perpetually, at such place or places as shall be fixed on by the General Conference from time to time.

6. At all times, when the General Conference is met, it shall take two-thirds of the whole number of delegates to form a quorum.

7. One of the *original* general superintendents shall preside in the General Conference; but in case no general superintendent is present, the General Conference shall choose a president *pro tem.*

8. The General Conference shall have full power to make rules, regulations, and canons for our Church under the following limitations and restrictions, viz.:

The General Conference shall not revoke, alter, or change our Articles of Religion nor establish any new standards of doctrine.

They shall not lessen the number of seven delegates from each Annual Conference, nor allow of a greater number from any Annual Conference than is provided in the fourth paragraph of this section.

They shall not change or alter any part or rule of our

government so as to do away episcopacy or to destroy the plan of our itinerant general superintendency.

They shall not revoke or change the General Rules of the United Societies.

They shall not do away the privileges of our ministers or preachers of trial by a committee and an appeal; neither shall they do away the privileges of our members of trial before the society, or by a committee, and of an appeal.

They shall not appropriate the produce of the Book Concern or of the Chartered Fund to any purpose other than for the benefit of the traveling, superannuated, supernumerary, and worn-out preachers, their wives, widows, and children.

Provided, nevertheless, that upon the joint recommendation of all the Annual Conferences, then a majority of two-thirds of the General Conference succeeding shall suffice to alter any of the above restrictions.

A whole day of discussion followed. To the general surprise, Jesse Lee opposed the report, and that on a mere side issue, insisting that the delegates should be chosen, not by ballot, but by the law of seniority. Others followed his lead and attacked different provisions of the plan. Late in the afternoon, by a parliamentary process that would not now be held in order, Ezekiel Cooper and Joshua Wells offered an awkwardly framed motion, which was carried, "to postpone the present question to make room for the consideration of a new resolution as preparatory to the minds of the brethren to determine on the present subject." The new resolution ran as follows: "Each Annual Conference respectively without debate shall annually choose by ballot its own presiding elders." It was an attempt to take away from the bishops in large part the power of appointment, which had always up to that time been held to inhere in the episcopacy. There

was much debate. But at last the resolution was defeated by a vote of 73 to 52. Just at this juncture further action was interrupted and McKendree was ordained. It was not strange, therefore, that, having been inducted under such circumstances, he should have in 1820 and always looked upon any limitation of the episcopal power of appointment as an invasion of the constitution.

On Wednesday afternoon, the 18th inst., it was moved and carried that the vote on the first resolution of the committee's report should be at once taken and by ballot. When the ballot was counted, it was found that the resolution had failed of adoption by a vote of 64 to 57. This was equivalent to the defeat of the whole measure. Great excitement followed. The most of the New Englanders withdrew from the Conference and began preparations to go home, counting their further presence useless; and the Westerners were in no comfortable frame of mind. It really looked as if the whole Church might go to pieces. But the wise counsels of Asbury, McKendree, and Hedding prevailed, and the dissatisfied brethren concluded to remain a little longer to see if something could not yet be done.

Matters stood in that shape from Wednesday till the following Monday morning.

When Monday's session came on, Leonard Cassel and Stephen G. Roszell moved that the question of the place for holding the next General Conference be delayed "till it shall be determined who will compose the General Conference." This was virtually a reconsideration of the whole subject. The motion prevailed,

and George and Roszell next moved "that the General Conference shall be composed of one member for every five members of each Annual Conference." This was a brief and effective substitute for the third and fourth items of the report and was "carried by a large majority." Joshua Soule, to close the mouth of Jesse Lee, next moved to further amend the second item of the report as follows: "Each Annual Conference shall have the power of sending their proportionate number of members to the General Conference either by seniority or choice as they shall see best." Lee laughed at this "Yankee trick," though he did not enjoy it; and on the next day, seconded by William Burke, he formally moved the adoption of the whole report as amended. Thus was accomplished what, on the whole, was the greatest and most useful piece of legislation ever enacted by a Methodist General Conference. Thereafter every part of the Church was guaranteed a fair share of influence in controlling and determining all measures of importance, and the whole body of the Church was assured that no temporary gust of passion or excitement would be able to overturn or even shake the foundations which the fathers had laid. The work of 1784 was crowned and completed in a manner which the experience of twenty years had found to be necessary. It is easy to see now that any further delay in the premises would certainly have been unwise and might have been fatal.

The exact action of the Conference in all its details was skillfully gathered up and put together by the editor of the Discipline of 1808. It runs as follows:

Question 2. Who shall compose the General Conference, and what are the regulations and powers belonging to it?

Answer 1. The General Conference shall be composed of one member for every five members of each Annual Conference, to be appointed either by seniority or choice, at the discretion of such Annual Conference; yet so that such representatives shall have traveled at least four full calendar years from the time that they are received on trial by an Annual Conference and are in full connection at the time of holding the Conference.

2. The General Conference shall meet on the first day of May, in the year of our Lord 1812, in the city of New York, and thenceforward on the first day of May once in four years, perpetually, in such place or places as shall be fixed on by the General Conference from time to time. But the general superintendents, with or by the advice of all the Annual Conferences, or, if there be no general superintendent, all the Annual Conferences respectively, shall have power to call a General Conference, if they judge it necessary, at any time.

3. At all times when the General Conferences meet it shall take two-thirds of the representatives of all the Annual Conferences to make a quorum for transacting business.

4. One of the general superintendents shall preside in the General Conference; but in case no general superintendent be present the General Conference shall choose a president *pro tempore.*

5. The General Conference shall have full powers to make rules and regulations for our Church under the following limitations and restrictions—viz.:

(1) The General Conference shall not revoke, alter, or change our Articles of Religion, nor establish any new standards or rules of doctrine contrary to our present existing and established standards of doctrine.

(2) They shall not allow of more than one representative for every five members of the Annual Conference, nor allow of a less number than one for every seven.

(3) They shall not change or alter any part or rule of our

government, so as to do away with episcopacy or destroy the plan of our itinerant general superintendency.

(4) They shall not revoke or change the General Rules of the United Societies.

(5) They shall not do away the privileges of our ministers or preachers of trial by a committee and of an appeal. Neither shall they do away the privileges of our members of trial before the society or by a committee and of an appeal.

(6) They shall not appropriate the produce of the Book Concern nor of the Chartered Fund to any purpose other than for the benefit of the traveling, supernumerary, superannuated, and worn-out preachers, their wives, widows, and children.

Provided, nevertheless, that upon the joint recommendation of all the Annual Conferences, then a majority of two-thirds of the General Conference succeeding shall suffice to alter any of the above restrictions.

CHAPTER X.

First Quadrennium in the Episcopacy.

The General Conference of 1808 having come to an end, the two bishops did not linger long in Baltimore or its vicinity, but started at once for the West. Asbury took the route through Maryland, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Kentucky, with trusty Henry Boehm as his traveling companion, and preaching as he went. McKendree followed the somewhat directer route across the full length of Virginia and Tennessee, reaching the neighborhood of Nashville early in July. As the Conference was not to meet till October 1, he concluded to make a side trip to Illinois and Missouri. Moving forward, therefore, through the southwestern part of Kentucky, he crossed the Ohio River on July 19 and entered the wilderness. Five other persons accompanied him: J. Ward, T. Lasly, Z. Maddox, M. Shelby, and J. White. Not all of them were ministers. Shelby was a sort of adventurer. He was a younger brother of Gov. Isaac Shelby, of Kentucky, had been a brave soldier in the Revolutionary War, and was ready for any enterprise that held the promise of new excitement. The company carried provisions for four days, enough to last them until they should reach the first settlement. McKendree's own account of the journey is very graphic and will abundantly bear repeating. "Lying out," he says, "was no hardship, but the water was extremely bad and the flies intolerable. Some persons had attempted to go through

the prairies and had turned back and advised us not to try it; but we resolved to go, trusting in the Lord. On the third day the flies afflicted us sorely, when a kind Providence sent a strong breeze and blew them all away. After twelve hours a shower of rain succeeded and blessed man and beast with water to drink. On Friday a little after dark we got to Brother Scott's, in the settlement. The old people were gone to the camp meeting, about fifteen miles off, but the children received and treated us kindly. On Saturday morning one of the most affecting scenes I ever witnessed occurred. As we drew near to the encampment about thirty of the neighbors fell in with us. We rode two deep, and a number of excellent singers went in front. We were all glad, and as we moved they sang delightfully with the spirit and the understanding. As we approached the congregation met us with open arms and welcomed us in the name of the Lord. The Lord was in the midst of us, and it was like sitting in a heavenly place."

As soon as this meeting closed McKendree and his companions crossed the Mississippi and went to a camp meeting in the Missouri Circuit, where a good beginning had been made the preceding year, and thence to a meeting near a French village beyond the Missouri not far from St. Charles. On the return trip the party recrossed the Mississippi at St. Louis, then a struggling village, and proceeded first to Goshen and from there to Big Spring, at each of which places they preached for several days with most gratifying results. McKendree was especially pleased to note the fact that the fruit of his labors in the preceding year

was still visible. Leaving Big Spring, they rode forty-five miles, "lodged in the wilderness, and rested in peace." The two following days and nights they spent in the same way. Recrossing the Ohio at the end of the third day, they went straight to successive camp meetings in Southern Kentucky and Middle Tennessee and took an active part in them.

The food of McKendree and his companions on the larger part of this journey had been only coarse bread and flesh broiled on sticks at the open fires. When he got back to the home of his old friend Gwin, at Fountain Head, about September 1, he had traveled on horseback more than 1,500 miles. That was pretty strenuous work for the first four months of his episcopacy. It is not surprising that he was "worn down with fatigue and exposure" and that for more than two weeks he was too sick to be out of bed. Going at that gait, even the strongest man could not easily hold up.

By October 1, however, McKendree was again on his feet and ready for the Conference at Liberty Hill, in Williamson County, twelve miles south of Nashville, the first of the year. Both he and Asbury, who was too weak to stay in one of the camp meeting tents, were the guests of Col. Green Hill, in whose old home in North Carolina the first Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America had been held in the fall of 1784. Colonel Hill was a notably good man, prominent both as a citizen and as a local minister, and the ancestor of several generations of worthy people.

During the whole Conference Asbury was sick and weak and left the presidency largely to McKendree,

reserving to himself, however, the stationing of the preachers. This was doubtless a wise distribution of labors, for McKendree from the beginning of his episcopal career was very able in the chair. It is likely, in fact, that not even Joshua Soule nor Holland N. McTyeire surpassed him in the easy administration of parliamentary law.

The question of slavery came up and was discussed with no little feeling. The General Conference of 1808 had passed an enactment "authorizing the Annual Conferences to form their own regulations relative to buying and selling slaves," and the bishops were now asked to give each a written opinion as to what course ought to be pursued. Bishop Asbury accordingly read a paper, suggesting caution and moderation and discouraging legislation on the vexed question. When he finished, there was an evident indication of dissatisfaction. Indeed, it is said that the audience hissed him. The good old bishop replied, suiting the action to the word: "O well, I can tear it up." Bishop McKendree then read his opinion, which substantially favored the rule so long in existence in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Conference acted in accordance with his suggestions, though there was a large dissenting minority, which embraced some of the best men in the Conference.

Apart from slavery, the business of the Conference went smoothly. Nearly a hundred preachers were present from Holston, Natchez, Opelousas, Missouri, Illinois, Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee. They were seasoned soldiers, inured to toil and hardship. The most of them had traveled long distances to reach the

gathering and were worn with fatigue and self-denial. Nearly to a man they were very poor. That was what they had expected when they entered the itinerancy, and it did not cause them to falter. Never was there a band of men better fitted to their surroundings nor happier in the discharge of their duties.

The South Carolina Conference was next in order. It was set for December 26 at Liberty Chapel, Greene County, Ga., near the present city of Greensboro. To reach it the two bishops traveled between 1,000 and 1,200 miles, the most of the way in a dilapidated thirty-dollar chaise, and the rest of it on horseback. Crossing the Cumberland Mountains, they went on through Knoxville, up the French Broad River to Asheville, N. C., where Asbury preached in the courthouse, and over the Blue Ridge and the South Fork of the Catawba River to Williamson's camp meeting, which they reached on November 11. Turning thence into South Carolina, they rode through Camden and other places to Charleston, and from that city to Augusta, Ga., and still farther to the home of John Bush, near the seat of the Conference. The mere recital of the successive steps of such a journey gives no conception of its difficulties. The roads were miserable and the accommodations usually poor. But the bishops endured all these things uncomplainingly. More than this, they preached scores of times along the route, and, indeed, were gravely distressed whenever a day passed without an opportunity to proclaim the gospel. More than once we find them complaining that the preachers and presiding elders through whose charges they had passed had failed to give proper notice of their coming and

to gather congregations for them. A little later than the present time McKendree records in his journal that in the course of a single week he had preached to nine little and lonely congregations in the northern part of New York. He did not wait for great crowds, but was ready to break the bread of life to even a handful of hungry souls. Bishop Paine, who had studied his earlier journals very closely, and who often traveled with him in his later years, makes this general remark: "He seems for months to have preached and traveled almost every day when not actually holding Conferences. Midwinter and summer were in this respect alike to him. Thus in November, 1810, he had no rest day; in December, two; in January, 1811, two; in February, none; in March, two; in April, none; in May, none; in June, none; in July, none; in August, two; in September, none."

He had the fixed habit of noting in his journal the texts from which he preached. Simply running over the list of them, one cannot fail to see that he did not fall into ruts, but covered a great variety of subjects from every part of the Holy Scriptures. It has been alleged of some of his successors that their range of topics was narrow. The writer of these lines once asked the late Bishop Fowler, whose humor had an acid touch in it: "Is it true that Bishop —— has only two sermons?" "Two?" he replied. "Is there really a second one?" Nobody would ever have thought of making such an inquiry about McKendree.

The South Carolina Conference, which, as indicated above, then included also the whole State of Georgia, was full of life, and the travel-worn bishops found

great compensation in the fellowship of the passing days. Between sixty and seventy itinerant preachers were present, "all of one spirit." A great many local preachers and laymen had also come up to the feast of tabernacles, the first ever held in that vicinity. Some of them had traveled one hundred and fifty miles and brought their tents with them. While the business sessions were going on in the rude church, there was incessant preaching, praying, and singing under the arbor, and not a little shouting also. The Georgia Methodists started out as a lively folk, and, God be thanked, they have not yet entirely lost the capacity to praise him with a loud voice.

The reports showed that there had been a net gain during the year of 3,088 members. Asbury fairly glowed as he wrote: "The prospects for doing good are glorious." Among the sixteen fine young men admitted on trial was William Capers, who was to leave a luminous track through the next half century as one of the wise and mighty leaders of the Church.

Three "missionaries" were included in the list of appointments. One of them was Matthew P. Sturdevant, who was sent to the Tombigbee country in Alabama, the first regular itinerant to enter that State, though Lorenzo Dow had been there as a sort of independent ranger sometime before. The other two were J. H. Mallard and J. E. Glenn, who were commissioned to the negroes on the Savannah and Santee Rivers. Even prior to this time there had been a great deal of preaching to the colored people, not only in the towns and cities, but also when occasion offered in the country; but now an organized and sustained effort

was set on foot to reach the poorest and the lowliest of them on the cotton and rice plantations. In this monumental enterprise, which finally brought more than a quarter of a million souls from the darkness of paganism to the light of Christ, the South Carolina Conference had the high honor of leading the way, and for the next fifty years maintained its primacy, giving up many of its best and ablest men to the work and spending in the aggregate nearly or quite a million dollars. It is surely the very irony of history that the only body of Christians that showed any deep and practical regard for the welfare of the slaves and that gathered more converts from them into the fold than could then be found in all the mission stations of all the world should later have been held up to the scorn and derision of Christendom because of its "connection with slavery," and this, too, by men and Churches who viewed the whole situation from a safe and easy distance and never risked their personal interests to improve it.

Bishop McTyeire pauses here with great grace in his "History of Methodism" to throw another side light on the course of events. This same James E. Glenn, self-sacrificing missionary on the Santee, was also destined to touch at a later day the man who was perhaps, all things considered, the greatest preacher that American Methodism has yet produced. Young Stephen Olin, fresh from his college course at Middlebury, Vt., full of all sorts of abilities, but without definite religious convictions of any sort, came down to South Carolina, hoping in that softer climate to recover his broken health, but not dreaming of the

career that lay out before him. In the good providence of God, which often accomplishes the greatest ends by strange means, he became an inmate in Mr. Glenn's home, and chiefly through the influence of that godly man was led to Christ. The rest of the story is "writ large" in the history of the Church and does not need to be set down here.

"A glance at the men and their distribution will show that the Conference holding the extreme southern position in 1808 was strong and laying a foundation for the future. There were giant leaders among them. Young Lovick Pierce, already marked out for eminence as a preacher and a legislator, kingliest of the kingly, only less great than his son, Bishop George F. Pierce, was presiding elder of the Oconee District; Britain Capel, of the Ogechee; Lewis Myers, of the Saluda; Daniel Asbury, of the Catawba; and Jonathan Jackson, of the Camden. James Jenkins, Hilliard Judge, Samuel Dunwoody, William Gassoway, William M. Kennedy, James Russell, and Joseph Tarpley were among the other laborers cultivating this portion of the vineyard."

Taking the back track immediately after the Conference had risen, the two bishops again visited Augusta, Ga., Camden, S. C., and Wilmington, Newbern, and Washington, in North Carolina, conducting religious services at all these and many other intermediate points, and finally coming to Tarboro, N. C., the appointed seat of the Virginia Conference, on January 31. Eighty-four preachers were present, and seventeen recruits were admitted into the ranks. To Asbury's great joy, only three preachers in the whole

Conference were married men. If he had been asked whether the New Testament insisted on a celibate ministry, he would, of course, have given a negative reply; but he undoubtedly thought that in the conditions then prevailing throughout the country a single life sorted well with the duties of the itinerancy, and it would have pleased him if all his brethren had been confirmed bachelors. His journal contains a delightful morsel *ad rem:* "The high taste of these Southern folks will not permit their families to be degraded by an alliance with a Methodist preacher, and thus involuntary celibacy is imposed upon us. All the better. Anxiety about worldly possessions does not stop our course, and we are saved from the pollutions of negro slavery and oppression." Very consolatory reflections! Jesse Lee admitted that he once thought himself called to the married state, but that the woman concerned could not see it that way. Since that day the average Methodist preacher in the South has not usually found his way to matrimony blocked. Indeed, his success in wife-winning has come to be a sort of standing marvel.

The two bishops did "teamwork" at this Conference, as usual. McKendree preached an ordination sermon on Friday and ordained eight elders, while Asbury on Sunday discoursed on "Humiliation before God" and laid hands on thirteen deacons. He estimated the audiences "in the two churches" at 2,000 souls. But most persons are likely to overestimate the size of a crowd. Even level-headed John Wesley did it in his day. It is not likely that there were two churches in Tarboro holding each a thousand persons.

The hospitality of the town was great. Thus the

good old Bishop says: "Our friends are very attentive to entertain us in their homes abundantly better than we deserve." As this writer can testify from personal experience, those Eastern North Carolinians have not yet forgotten how to exercise the grace of courteous entertainment. It has descended from father to son in an unbroken line.

Nothing could be more significant than the next quotation from the journal. Dr. Stevens in his brilliant history of the Methodist Episcopal Church almost wails over it as an indication of a lapse from perfect righteousness on Bishop Asbury's part; but really and truly it is nothing more than a sign that the Bishop in the face of stubborn facts was learning a great lesson of common sense. Here it is:

> Our increase in numbers, unless we allow for a great waste by death and loss by removals, is not very encouraging. The West and South have given us more than three thousand each, whereas here it is not three hundred. We are defrauded of great numbers by the pains that are taken to keep the blacks from us. Their masters are afraid of the influence of our principles. Would not an *amelioration* in the condition and treatment of the slaves have produced more practical good to the poor Africans than any attempt at their *emancipation?* The state of society unhappily does not admit of this; besides, the blacks are deprived of the means of instruction. Who will take the pains to lead them into the way of salvation and watch over them, that they may not stray but the Methodists? Well, now their masters will not let them come to hear us. What is the personal liberty of the African, which he may abuse, to the salvation of his soul?

From Tarboro Bishop McKendree journeyed northeastward through a deep snow, calling for a day at

his father's house, in Greenville County, Va., and preaching twice while there. Thence he continued his ride through Petersburg and Richmond to Port Republic and on to Harrisonburg, Va., reaching the last-mentioned place about March 1. On the most of this long journey Asbury was with him, as his journal conclusively shows. Conference opened at Harrisonburg on March 2 and lasted till March 8.

By a blunder which it is difficult to understand in so careful and accurate a man Bishop Paine says that this was a sort of second session of the Virginia Conference held for the convenience of the Virginia preachers who were too remote to get to Tarboro. But, as a matter of fact, it was the Baltimore Conference, and could have been none other; for Harrisonburg was then, and always has been, in the bounds of the Baltimore Conference. Furthermore, if this were not the Baltimore Conference, then no session of that body was held for that year, an impossible supposition. The General Minutes, moreover, confirm the view that I have taken. Bishop Paine's mistake probably grew out of the fact that Bishop McKendree in his journal by a curious slip wrote "Virginia" instead of "Baltimore" and afterwards failed to notice and correct it.

Both Asbury and McKendree were well acquainted among the Baltimore brethren and greatly enjoyed the renewal of old companionships. To the former, in particular, getting back into that region was like getting home. He was headed for it when death overtook him, in 1816. The regular business of the Conference did not differ much from that of the Conferences which

had just before been held. Ten young men were received on trial and ten others into full connection. Among those received on trial was Beverly Waugh, later to become an honored general superintendent of the whole Church, one of those balanced and capable men who, without shining abilities in any direction, are yet useful on all the ground. The statistical reports were even less encouraging than those at the Virginia Conference. They actually showed a decrease of 1,726 in the membership and must have given rise to grave questionings. Then, as now, the Church seemed to go forward, not along the whole line, but by divisions and sections. But there was abounding life in the old Baltimore Conference, as the coming years would show.

The next stage of their journey took the bishops through another deep snow to Alexandria, Georgetown, and Washington City, preaching, of course, as they went. Thence they pursued their way to Baltimore and Wilmington, Del., and finally to Philadelphia, where the Conference convened April 3-10. McKendree seemed to mend his grip on the road. At this Conference he preached six times. Fortunately for him, Asbury did the most of the cabinet work and left him comparatively free to exercise his great gifts as an evangelist, which were more and more admired in every part of the country. Father Francis does not seem to have got along so well here as elsewhere. "There was some little difficulty," his narrative runs, "with the money concerns, and some of the members had been rather warm partisans as politicians. This is always wrong, let them take which side they please.

. . . The Philadelphia Conference has subjected itself to a demand for twelve preachers who have no stations. Six are married, and there is a widow's maintenance to be added, an expense all told of $2,000. I am not conscious of indulging or feeling wrong tempers in the mighty work at which I labor, but I never wish to meet the Conference in the city of Philadelphia again." Even Asbury had his juniper tree moods. There was really no reason for despondency. The gain in membership for the year had been over one thousand, and fifteen preachers were received on trial and fourteen into full connection. The outlook was good all around the horizon.

The New York Conference was next in order, and so the bishops renewed their itinerary by way of Burlington, Trenton, and other towns, reaching New York City on May 9 and opening the first session three days later. McKendree again magnified the pulpit, though he occupied it only four times in the course of the Conference. Asbury was still suffering from some mental depression: "If I have slept five hours a night, it is as much as I have done in the matter of sleep." There were "some critical cases" among the preachers, though none were deemed deserving of expulsion. One thing pleased the bishops: "There were one hundred and fifteen preachers stationed and few complaints." Another cheering fact was a gain of over four thousand in the membership and a considerable accession to the ranks of the ministry. Both the bishops were much impressed by their first sight of a steamboat—"a great invention."

In order to get to Monmouth, in Maine, at which

place the New England Conference was to assemble, it was necessary for the bishops to ride about seven hundred miles on horseback, and it took them twenty-one days to do it, not counting the Sundays, on which, of course, they laid by. It was the old story with them —always on the go and always "holding forth the word of life" as they went. Asbury had often been in New England before; but McKendree had now come thither for the first time, and his eyes were wide open to everything that passed before him. He and Asbury traveled to Boston by different routes, spreading themselves thus over the country. It had been arranged that from Boston they should journey in company, but it did not turn out so. The journal reads thus:

Monday, June 5.—I set out from Waltham this morning with the pleasant expectation of meeting Bishop Asbury in Boston, fourteen miles distant, from which place, according to our general plan, I was to have the pleasure of his company to Monmouth, about one hundred and fifty miles. We met, but what was my disappointment when, before I was seated, the old gentleman in a very pleasant mood presented me with a new plan which directed us to different routes! Accordingly, after a few hours, we parted. I followed directions and moved on as I could, and in a day or two he came after me on the same road the greater part of the way.

Evidently the senior bishop was becoming a little notioned, and evidently also the junior did not quite relish being dealt with as if he were something of a novice. Well, the saints are human, even the best of them, and that is what brings them close to us.

On June 10 McKendree again makes a record: "I have passed through nearly all the seaport towns in

my course and preached in Boston, Lynn, and Portsmouth this week. There is a beautiful prospect of religion in Portsmouth, the seat of government for New Hampshire. I heard more doctrinal sentiments and more breathing after holiness expressed in a love feast here than in any other place I have visited lately." Possibly McKendree did not know that "doctrinal sentiments" are the New Englander's vital breath and native air.

Of the Conference, McKendree says: "It commenced on the 15th and closed on the evening of the fourth day. This is an amiable body of preachers, having many difficulties to encounter and much love to support them." Asbury's note is fuller and more specific: "On June 18, Sunday, I preached to about three thousand deeply attentive people from Isaiah xliv. 23. We have eighty-two men to do the work, forty of whom compose the Conference, the rest being supplies. . . . We have ordained twenty-one deacons and seven elders. We have located eleven elders, readmitted one, and added seventeen preachers on trial. There is a small increase here and fair prospects for the future." Another sentence from the Bishop sounds an unusual note: "I have to lament my want of information respecting both the circuits and the preachers." The connection has grown so wide that he can no longer have accurate personal knowledge of it. This fact ought to have suggested to him the propriety of some alteration in his plan of making the appointments, but it did not do so. Men of sixty-five do not easily take to new ways.

The Conference ended, the bishops mounted their

horses once more and turned their faces toward the west, passing through Northern New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio to Cincinnati, already becoming the queen city of the West, and now for the first time to entertain a Methodist Conference. To follow these two devoted servants of God in this long and tiresome route would be a pleasant task, but we should get no strictly new information by doing so. They rode hard over rough roads, crossed rivers, lakes, and mountains, endured all sorts of beds and all sorts of food, preached at every stopping place, wrought mightily in several camp meetings, and got to Cincinnati on September 27, in good time for the Western Conference, which opened on the 30th.

For the next three years, moreover, they kept closely to the same general schedule thus described. Every year they made the circuit of the whole Church, a distance of about six thousand miles, and met all the Annual Conferences with unvarying punctuality.

Asbury's age and infirmities were beginning to tell upon him. More and more he left a large share of the work to McKendree, whom he had learned to trust implicitly and who never refused to carry any load that was put upon him. Before the quadrennium was finished, the junior bishop had completely mastered all the details of his office—indeed, he knew the most of them to begin with—and had learned to meet its duties with the easy skill of a veteran. Without being a martinet, he adhered strictly to parliamentary procedure. The Conferences soon discovered that he would not tolerate any looseness or disorder and quietly submitted to his strong guidance. Even the New York Conference,

which was given to interminable discussion and sometimes held on for a full ten days, learned how to get through in about half that time. This does not mean that McKendree was autocratic or discourteous in the chair. Far from it. As a matter of fact, he was a perfect model of gentlemanliness. But he understood the art of presiding, and he practiced it. Every matter received due consideration at his hands, and every man was accorded a fair hearing. The result, as might have been expected, was highly satisfactory except to the few brethren who could no longer enjoy a monopoly of the Conference floor, and even they were bound to see in time that a deliberate assembly without a fixed method of transacting its affairs is a virtual impossibility.

In spite of the great respect which the two bishops had for each other, they could not always agree even on important matters. From the beginning Asbury had been in the habit of making the appointments, as Wesley did, on his own judgment and without consulting anybody. That he had the legal right to do this is indisputable, and indeed few persons, if any, were inclined to dispute it. But McKendree saw very clearly that, with the rapid enlargement of the connection, it would become impossible for any bishop to acquire sufficient knowledge of the men and the Churches to make proper adjustments between them without direct counsel and advice from the presiding elders. Asbury sought to change his mind on the subject, but in vain. In a letter of October 8, 1811, McKendree courteously but firmly declined to yield. And so the cabinet became one of the fixed features of Episcopal Methodism.

No General Conference created it, nor has it ever had any statutory recognition in the Church. McKendree thought that he needed it and introduced it. Its permanency has grown out of its usefulness. By common consent it remains to this day.

CHAPTER XI.

At His First General Conference as a Bishop.

The General Conference which met in Old John Street Church, New York City, May 1, 1812, marked the beginning of a new era in the history of Methodism. As set out in a former chapter, all previous General Conferences had been simply mass conventions of the traveling ministers and had acted, moreover, without restrictions of any sort upon their authority. But this one was made up of ninety chosen delegates from the eight Annual Conferences into which the Church was then divided and was limited in its powers by the six restrictive rules, which were designed to have the force of a written constitution. But it remained to be seen how far the delegates would be true to the letter and spirit of these rules or would proceed to legislate as if they did not exist.

Very naturally the Church was deeply concerned as to the result. But the character of the delegates was reassuring. "Among the ninety," says Bishop McTyeire, "we gladly recognize such veterans as Garrettson, Cooper, Lee, Ware, Bruce, Reed, and Snethen, and a fair proportion of that second generation of men whose names are Methodist history—Soule, Hedding, Bangs, Pickering, Sale, Blackman, Sargent, and Roszell—but special interest gathers about a group of picked young men who came for the first time to the front: Lovick Pierce, John Early, Thomas L. Douglass, James E. Glenn, Samuel Dunwoody, Enoch

George, and Robert R. Roberts. These men, it was believed, would not deal lightly with constitutional restraints.

There was much comfort also in the fact that two such trained and capable leaders as Asbury and McKendree were to preside over the deliberations of the Conference. Though wholly alike in their devotion to Christ and his Church, they differed much in mental structure and characteristics. It need scarcely be said that in sheer power of intellect McKendree was decidedly the stronger man. He had a habit of looking at things in their principles and of forecasting the probable results of measures and policies. From the beginning Asbury had been more or less addicted to personal government. Under the circumstances it was almost necessarily so. When he reached America there was no Methodist Church, but only a few weak and scattered societies. Out of these societies he had seen the Church grow. He had been always in the lead and had been compelled to shape his plans without the illumination of precedent or the guidance of definite statutes. He held much the same relation to his fellow Methodists in this country which Mr. Wesley had to those in England. Simply because of this fact everybody had become used to accepting his decisions as final. The natural reaction helped to confirm in him a sense of authority, though, owing to the intrinsic qualities of his character, it never made him rude nor arrogant. His paternalism was genial and kindly.

McKendree was wise enough to know that the Church would never consent to invest another man with Asbury's preëminence. Nor did he covet it for

himself. Of deliberate choice, he sought to make his administration one of law. In all his official conduct he kept in view the requirements of the constitution and of the statutes framed under it. The loose way in which the Annual Conferences had been allowed to carry on business did not please him. It involved the unnecessary consumption of time and bred confusion and ill will. As far as he could effect it, he meant that everything should now be done decently and in order.

Up till and including 1808 the bishops had been in every sense of the word members of the General Conference with identically the same right to introduce motions or resolutions, to debate questions, and to vote as other members. But by the operation of the constitution their powers in the respects mentioned were entirely taken away, though additional guaranties were attached to their general status as officers of the Church with defined functions. They became simply the constitutional presidents or moderators of the General Conference, without authority to intervene directly in the proceedings of the body. That position they have held ever since, though masterful men among them, such as Joshua Soule, Robert Paine, George F. Pierce, and Holland N. McTyeire, have not hesitated on grave occasions, law or no law, to take the risk of speaking out their minds from the floor or the platform. Usually they have been heard with close and courteous attention because of the great and general respect entertained for their ability and force. But men of smaller caliber would surely be subjected to

severe criticism if they should undertake to pursue a similar course.

In view of the changed relation of the bishops to the General Conference and of other weighty considerations, it seemed to McKendree that some lawful and recognized method should be adopted by which the bishops should be able in a dignified and orderly manner to communicate to the Conference any important information in their possession or to make any suggestions that they might deem of value. Otherwise it was clear either that they would be tempted to take an open part in the discussions or else would become mere ornamental dummies without any participation whatever in matters touching the very life and growth of the Church. Hence he determined to read a written address at the beginning of the session, both giving a full account of his own stewardship for the preceding quadrennium and also furnishing a brief exhibit of what he conceived to be the general state and needs of the Church. But before taking the proposed step he was judicious enough to consult a number of the older and wiser delegates, including some who were and some who were not his special friends. If there were to be any dangerous rocks or shoals ahead, he did not propose to run on them.

Just why he did not also consult Asbury it is not possible to say with certainty. But it is likely that he knew or suspected that Asbury would be opposed to the innovation and concluded that it would be better to follow his own judgment, reënforced as it had been by that of chosen brethren, and then make any necessary explanations or apologies afterwards. That he

could have deliberately meditated an act of discourtesy toward his senior colleague is not possible. All the records show that he was uniformly and profoundly deferential to Asbury, never once forgetting what was due to his age and position.

Compared with the voluminous documents which the bishops now put forth, McKendree's address was very short, and none the worse for that fact. It avoided all irrelevant issues and went straight to the heart of things. Such an example is worthy of imitation. Woodrow Wilson has lately taught us afresh the value of concise directness in documents designed to reach and move the minds of men. There is no earthly reason why a General Conference should be taxed to listen for several hours to a mere array of facts and figures with the most of which it is already familiar.

When McKendree had finished reading and taken his seat, a dramatic incident occurred. Asbury, who had been taken by surprise, but was too much of a gentleman to offer an interruption, now arose and said to him: "I have something to say to you before the Conference." McKendree at once got to his feet, and the two stood face to face. Then Asbury proceeded: "This is a new thing; I never did business in this way; and why is this new thing introduced?" There was something more than a trace of irritation in the old man's voice. It looked as if there might be some trouble between the superintendents. But McKendree was equal to the emergency. With consummate courtesy he replied: "You are our father; we are your sons. You never had any need of it. I am only a brother and have need of it." Nothing could

have been finer. Only an instinctive gentleman could have handled the situation with so much skill. Asbury's feelings were at once soothed. He saw that no unkindness had been intended and sat down promptly with a smile on his face. We have had episcopal addresses ever since and probably shall continue to have them as long as the episcopacy itself lasts.

After the disposition of McKendree's address by the reference of different parts of it to the proper committees, Asbury made a brief and characteristic speech, and then the Conference settled down to business. First and last, it did a good many things. During the preceding quadrennium the bishops without express authorization had organized the Genesee Conference. The action was doubtless wise, but not warranted, and provoked a good deal of criticism. Asbury had taken the precaution to secure the approval of the Annual Conferences for what he had done, and the General Conference now lent its sanction. But the bishops have never since taken the responsibility upon themselves of creating an Annual Conference. That is a matter wholly in the hands of the General Conference. The old Western Conference, which had embraced the entire Mississippi Valley, was now divided into the Ohio and Tennessee Conferences. Asbury thought that the time would come when five would be necessary in the same territory and had their boundaries definitely marked out in mind. If he had lived long enough, he might have seen more than fifty.

After protracted debate it was resolved to bestow elder's orders upon properly qualified local preachers. Jesse Lee and other men of insight opposed this ac-

tion, chiefly upon the ground that it is not possible for any man to take the vows of the eldership on himself with a good conscience unless he intends to give himself wholly to the ministry. But as a majority of the itinerant elders, after a few years of traveling, located and took their orders with them, the force and pertinency of the argument seemed to be broken, especially as in those days the services of worthy local preachers were frequently much needed in the administration of the sacraments. Nevertheless, this legislation by turning a class of lay preachers into a sort of halfway clergymen did no little harm. The British Methodists in adhering to the original conception of Wesley have shown greater wisdom.

James Axley, who never missed a chance to hit whisky or slavery, again moved "that no stationed or local preacher shall retail spirituous or malt liquor without forfeiting his ministerial character among us." That the Conference should have dillydallied with this motion for some time and should finally have voted it down is a piece of history in which no Methodist can glory. In fact, if it were not narrated in full in the Journal, one would be tempted to say that it never happened. Axley was thoroughly disgusted with the whole performance, but not discouraged. He was in the war to the finish, and no defeat in a preliminary skirmish could cause him to lose heart or to cease his efforts against the liquor traffic.

As a kind of offset to its action the Conference in its pastoral address made the following deliverance: "It is with regret that we have seen the use of ardent spirits, dram-drinking, etc., so common among the

Methodists. We have endeavored to suppress the practice by our example, but it is necessary that we add precept to example; and we really think it not consistent with the character of a Christian to be immersed in the practice of distilling or retailing an article so destructive to the morals of society, and we do earnestly recommend the Annual Conferences and our people to join with us in making a firm and constant stand against an evil which has ruined thousands both in time and in eternity." That sounds well, but was altogether too mild a measure to meet the exigency.

In spite of the fact that the General Conference of 1808, before adopting the constitution, had expressly declined to take away from the bishops the authority to appoint the presiding elders and had therefore included this power in that "plan of our itinerant general superintendency" which is covered and protected by the third restrictive rule, an attempt was now made to pass a statute providing for the election of the presiding elders by the several Annual Conferences. Laban Clark introduced a motion to that effect. Nicholas Snethen offered an amendment "that the bishops shall have power to nominate presiding elders, and if the first nomination is not ratified by a majority of the Annual Conference the bishop shall proceed to nominate till a choice is made; and in all cases each nomination shall be determined separately by ballot without debate." The debate lasted for two days and was very able. Lee, Garrettson, Cooper, Snethen, and Phœbus were among the chief advocates of the change. The delegates from New York, Philadelphia,

and Genesee had been instructed by their Conferences to vote for it, and they did so in a body. The Southern and Western delegates were mostly opposed to it. When the vote was taken, the majority against it was only four, uncomfortably narrow. What would have happened if the measure had prevailed? Would McKendree at that time have had the courage and the influence to arrest it as he did in 1820?

After the discussion and the balloting were over, Asbury, being anxious to allay any unpleasant feelings that had been aroused, had seventeen of the preachers of both parties to dine with him. He probably had the English conviction that some things can be effected at a dinner table better than elsewhere, and, indeed, it is true that eating and drinking together has a natural tendency to soften men's antipathies toward one another. He pleasantly says: "There was vinegar, mustard, and a still greater portion of oil; but the disappointed parties sat down in peace, and we enjoyed our sober meal." It was the last occasion of the sort that he should ever enjoy. Before another General Conference he was in Paradise.

As Bishop Asbury's health was uncertain, and as he had been urgently invited to visit England at an early date, the Committee on Episcopacy asked whether it was his intention to accept the invitation, and also inquired whether the bishops would need another colleague to enable them to meet all the demands made upon the episcopacy. Bishop Asbury replied in a written communication, saying that he had given up all thought of "visiting out of the American Continent" and adding that, whatever may have been his former

opinion on the subject, he was not in a position to say: "Do this or that." Bishop McKendree, probably out of regard for Bishop Asbury, said nothing at all. The Committee on Episcopacy, therefore, brought in a recommendation that no additional bishops be elected, and this recommendation was accepted by the Conference. Yet it must have been evident to everybody with open eyes that Bishop Asbury was no longer fit for active service. In common justice to him he ought to have been retired; and in common justice to Bishop McKendree a strong man, not beyond middle life, ought to have been added to the episcopacy. To leave one man, and he almost threescore years old, to carry so vast a load as now rested on his shoulders was neither kind nor wise. There is nothing so valuable as capable human service and nothing more to be deplored than the thoughtless and reckless way in which it is often squandered. As will be apparent before we are through, McKendree was practically worn out at the end of ten years in his office, though he kept going heroically, but with all the odds against him, more than twice that long. It is easy to admire his courage, but not possible to commend the judgment which led him to squander the immense force that ought to have been conserved for future years.

CHAPTER XII.

In Full Swing.

The period between 1812 and 1816 was a difficult one for religious work in the United States. For the first three years of it the war with Great Britain was in progress, and that preoccupied the public mind. All the Churches suffered, the Methodist along with the rest. It is a sad story that the statistics tell. The total membership for 1813 was 214,311 and for 1815 only 211,365. Yet it must not be inferred that the ministers were either indolent or incapable. They went their customary rounds, kept the churches open, and furnished the people with the word of life. Taking everything into the account, it is somewhat more than likely that they did the best they could.

The bishops certainly displayed great diligence. As stated in the close of the last chapter, Asbury's health was steadily and rapidly failing, but he dragged himself forward with a resoluteness of will that was worthy of all admiration. During the first year of the quadrennium he managed to be present at every Conference, and even in the following years he was rarely absent. But his inability to preach and to preside as formerly, which became constantly more pronounced, threw increasing burdens on the shoulders of McKendree, who himself now and then began to show signs of the wear and tear to which he was subjected; but he kept going as if he were made of steel springs. McKendree was a careful traveler, but in 1814 he met

with an accident while on his way from New York to Ohio that disabled him for several weeks and impaired his vigor for many months. On July 29, as he was riding along the road, his horse "started suddenly and threw him with great violence among the rocks, so that his right hip and side suffered considerable injury. That no bones were broken was wonderful." His journal adds: "I was taken in a wagon on the 30th and carried to my good friend, Thomas Weston's. But the roads were rough, and I suffered much." Five separate attempts were made to draw blood from him, but all without success. The lancet was old and dull and the operator without skill. For several days he was confined to his bed. When he got up, he could not move without crutches. A brave effort to renew his journey showed him that he was utterly unfit for the road. So he returned to Weston's and lay by till his strength was somewhat recovered. Broken and weak as he was, he nevertheless preached to the friends who came in great numbers to see him and also held class meeting. As soon as possible he was again on the wing.

In spite of the pain and disability which followed the accident, he actually met all his Conferences, except the Ohio, and everywhere was hailed with delight. His preaching continued to be a constant source of wonder and edification. He grew in intellectual energy and in emotional warmth. Before large congregations and small ones alike and in city churches and country chapels he uniformly proclaimed the gospel as an anointed prophet of God.

Bishop Asbury's journal for 1813, in speaking of the

New York Conference, says: "Bishop McKendree preached. It appeared to me as if a ray of divine glory rested on him. His subject was, 'Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them.' The appearance, manner, and preaching of Brother McKendree produced a powerful effect upon Joshua Marsden, a British missionary, who had been at our Conference." The penalty which McKendree paid for his eloquence was, of course, to be put forward on all occasions without much consideration for his physical condition.

It also came to be understood that his judgment on all points of ecclesiastical law was unusually clear and sound, and so every brother that had a bothersome question brought it before him for adjudication. The only thing that surpassed the simplicity of his opinions was the brevity of them. At the Virginia Conference he was asked whether a presiding elder can lawfully preside over a committee sitting on the trial of a local preacher, and he replied: "He can and sometimes he ought, but as a usual thing it is better that he should not." On the same occasion, objection having been offered to the ordination of certain local preachers because the Quarterly Conferences recommending them were composed of only a few members, it was moved "that the Conference determine what proportion of the official members of a circuit shall constitute a Quarterly Conference," and he decided the motion to be out of order "because it would operate against the rule of the General Conference."

Much has been said in many books of the faithfulness with which he performed all his public duties. It

ought also to be said with great emphasis that he was equally careful in regard to all his more private obligations. Whenever he entered any home he took pains to have family prayers and as far as possible to exhort each member of the household. The late Andrew Monroe, who rode with him in the winter of 1819 from Nashville to Washington City, tells that he failed of keeping up this custom at only one place on the route, and that was a public tavern where the opportunity was denied him. Throughout the Church he was a welcome guest. Very pathetic is the fact that little children loved to climb on the knees of this homeless and childless old preacher and to put their arms in confidence about his neck.

From year to year the Conferences warmed to him with an increasing veneration and affection; and this was true not in one part of the country merely, but in every part. He was loved as much in far-off and chilly New England as in his native Virginia or his adopted Tennessee. In the winter of 1812 the South Carolina Conference kindly requested him to take one of their number with him as a traveling companion at their expense, and recommended for the place James Norton, who gladly accepted it, and shared the Bishop's journeys for a whole year. This was not the first instance of the sort nor the last one. Whatever Christian thoughtfulness could do to lighten the burdens or cheer the path of this devoted servant of the Church was done promptly and gladly.

Bishop McKendree was deeply moved by the death of Bishop Coke, which took place on the Indian Ocean May 2, 1814, but news of which did not reach America

till some months later. Though Coke had been away from the country for nine years, he was still much esteemed and honored on this side the water, as indeed he thoroughly deserved to be. His services to world-wide Methodism were too large to be easily or speedily forgotten. To the Methodists of the United States he was an apostle. In spite of certain superficial faults, chief of which was the disposition to reach hasty conclusions and to act without consulting his brethren, he was a very great man. His versatility was marvelous. Scholar, author, presbyter of the Church of England, effective circuit rider, bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, Secretary and President of the British Wesleyan Conference, and most active, hopeful, and daring of missionary leaders, he magnified the grace of God in every sphere. In the constellation of Methodist worthies his name will shine with undimmed splendor forever.

As the years went on many of Bishop McKendree's intimate friends and companions began to drop by the way, and a shadow of increasing loneliness often fell across his heart. His last interviews with Asbury were full of solemn and tender pathos. At Cincinnati in the fall of 1815 they had long and earnest conversations concerning the future welfare of the Church. A few weeks later, and for the last time, they met at the Tennessee Conference, near Nashville. Asbury had made his will, leaving all his little savings to the Church, and was ready to depart and be with the Lord. An entry in his journal shows that he knew he would soon cross over Jordan:

Sabbath.—I ordained the deacons and preached a sermon in which Dr. Coke was remembered. My eyes fail. I resign the stations to Bishop McKendree. I will take away my feet.

Nevertheless, he started for the South Carolina Conference, which was to meet in Charleston, and got within thirty miles of that city before his strength gave out. The Conference kept in daily touch with him and interceded at the throne for him. After some days he grew better and set his face toward the north along the same track that he had traveled more than sixty times before, hoping to reach the General Conference, which was to meet in Baltimore the following May. On the route he wrote a final letter to Bishop McKendree, full of interest concerning the missions to the Germans in Pennsylvania and of other enterprises of the Church. To the very last he had a burning zeal for the welfare of souls. The nobility of his character shines through every line of this epistle to his colleague.

Tenderly nursed by his traveling companion, the indefatigable John Wesley Bond, and moving along in easy stages, he reached Richmond, Va., and preached his last sermon there on Sunday, March 24, 1816. He was so weak that friends had to lift him in and out of the church. Being unable to stand, he was seated upon a table especially prepared for that purpose. His text was Romans ix. 28: "For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth." "The audience was much affected and crowded around him at the close of the service to receive his parting blessing." Seeing his almost exhausted state, many friends would have

gladly detained him in that city at least till the weather should grow warmer and the roads better. But his heart was set on Baltimore, and he pushed right along, arriving on Friday, the 28th, at the home of his old friend, George Arnold, about twenty miles south of Fredericksburg, and near many of the bloody battle fields of our Civil War, Spottsylvania County, Va.

The next morning he was quite unable to go farther, and it speedily became evident to himself and to all his attendants that he had finished his race. Saturday and Sunday he lay dying but conscious. At his request Bond read and expounded the twenty-first chapter of Revelation. On Monday morning, "full of confidence, full of love," the venerable father in Israel breathed his last. His body was laid away in the family burying ground of Mr. Arnold. Within a few weeks, however, at the urgent request of the General Conference, then in session, it was disinterred and taken to Baltimore, where on the 10th of May, after a funeral oration by Bishop McKendree and in the presence of the General Conference and a vast concourse of citizens, it was deposited under the pulpit of the Eutaw Street Church. There it remained till its final removal in June, 1834, to Mount Olivet Cemetery, in which *campo santo,* surrounded by the dust of many other of Methodism's glorious dead, it sleeps in peace till Jesus comes.

What a career! The son of an English peasant, without wealth or social advantages or extraordinary intellectual endowments or the training of the schools, he achieved by sheer moral force results of the most amazing magnitude. His ministry began in his seven-

teenth and ended in his seventy-first year. For forty-five years he served the Methodists of America, thirty-two years of that time in the episcopacy. It is not known or believed that he ever once shirked a hardship or evaded a responsibility. All there was of him belonged to Jesus Christ. In the midst of titanic labors that carried him more than sixty times from one end of the republic to the other he never forgot to maintain the closest personal relations with his Lord. He lived and died a holy and humble Christian. His name is one of the great inheritances of Methodism.

When the General Conference of 1816 met in Baltimore May 1, one hundred and six out of the one hundred and fifteen delegates chosen by the nine Annual Conferences appeared and took their seats. The recent death of Bishop Asbury cast a shadow over the body. Bishop McKendree was now quite alone in his office and was suffering both from severe pain and from general debility. His address to the Conference was even shorter than usual, but not lacking in point. Among other things he said: "Such is the manifest weakness of the superintendency at present that it cannot fully discharge all the duties connected with this department." Such a suggestion was scarcely needed to make the situation apparent. If the Church was to be kept going as an Episcopal Church, it must have more bishops. Nobody was surprised when the Committee on Episcopacy recommended the election of two new men, and on the 14th inst. Enoch George, of the Baltimore Conference, and Robert R. Roberts, of the Philadelphia Conference, were chosen. The former received fifty-seven and the latter fifty-five out

of one hundred and six votes. Both were worthy men, though neither could be matched with McKendree. Roberts was born in Maryland in 1778, but was chiefly brought up in Western Pennsylvania. Converted at fourteen and licensed to exhort at twenty, he entered the Baltimore Conference in 1802, and had therefore been an itinerant only fourteen years when he was made a bishop. Until 1808 he traveled large circuits. But his preaching at the General Conference of that year made so great an impression that he was stationed in Baltimore. After the expiration of his term in that city, he was removed to Philadelphia. His next appointment was to the Schuylkill District, from which post he was raised to the episcopacy. His character was sound and stanch. He had a genuine Christian experience and preached with much power. His great size interfered somewhat with the discharge of his duties. He weighed two hundred and twenty pounds. No horse could easily carry him on a long journey, and as a result he was often late in reaching the Conferences. His sympathies were very acute, and he sometimes allowed them to sway his judgment. That was the weak spot in his administration. His modesty was almost morbid. Bishop Paine says: "His whole person indicated him to be one of nature's noblemen. His features were large, benignant, and intellectual. His head was of uncommon size; his forehead was high and massive; his eyes blue or hazel-colored; his manner of address always easy and graceful; his voice a deep bass, but soft and musical. . . . The art of oratory he never studied, and yet occasionally he almost reached the highest standard in that

noblest of all arts. He practiced the art without knowing it, for nature and grace made him an orator."

Bishop George was born in 1768 or 1769 in the northern neck of Virginia. Like William McKendree, he was converted under the ministry of John Easter. He was admitted into the Baltimore Conference in 1789. After traveling about ten years in Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia, he located in 1799; but he was readmitted by the Baltimore Conference in 1800 and made presiding elder, in which office he continued for eight years. "He was low of stature, but stoutly built. His features were grave and expressive; his eyes were small and deeply seated beneath a heavy, over-hanging brow." His voice was an instrument of rare power. His distinguishing gifts were in the pulpit. By all tokens he must have been a really wonderful preacher. But his knowledge of constitutional law was quite limited. He was not an uncommon presiding officer. His lack of capacity in those respects sorely tried Bishop McKendree, who now and then talked to him as plainly as Paul did to Peter. Bishop Paine says: "His very kindness and love of peace led him to make concessions and compromises which might have been very prejudicial to the interests of the Church." But he was deeply loved and much sought after in every part of the Church.

The General Conference created two new Conferences, one in Missouri and one in Mississippi, of which more by and by. It did also a wise thing in electing Joshua Soule to the book agency. He had no experience in such matters; but he took the Book Concern when it was sorely pressed for ready money, made a

loan to meet the emergency, toiled almost night and day at his task, and soon had everything in shipshape. As a sort of side issue he edited for two years—1818-20—the *Methodist Magazine* and ran up the subscription list to ten thousand.

The old question of electing the presiding elders was again up. Samuel Merwin moved that they be chosen by the Annual Conferences on the nomination of the bishops. To this motion Nathan Bangs offered an amendment, which was accepted by the mover, as follows: "And the presiding elder so elected and appointed shall remain in office for four years, unless sooner dismissed by the mutual consent of the bishop and the Conference or unless he be elected to some other office by the General Conference. But no presiding elder shall be removed from office during the term of four years without his consent unless the reasons for such removal be stated to him in the presence of the bishop and the Conference, who shall decide without debate." The vote being taken on the amended motion, it was lost by forty-two to sixty. McKendree said nothing, but was keenly watchful.

The matter of slavery also was again pushed to the front as "unfinished business." Since 1808 each Annual Conference had been authorized to make its own rules on the subject. This arrangement was satisfactory to nobody, least of all to the extreme abolitionists, whose consciences clamored for drastic action. After the hearing of a report which expressed little hope for the early extirpation of the evil, the law was changed so as to read: "No slaveholder shall be eligible to any official station in our Church hereafter

where the laws of the State in which he lives will admit of emancipation and permit the liberated slave to enjoy freedom." Though agitation was kept up without ceasing, this enactment was kept in force unaltered till 1844. Under it the Southern delegates in that year insisted that Bishop Andrew had broken no rule of the Discipline and challenged a formal trial. The failure to answer this challenge was proof that it could not be answered.

Among other items of business transacted was one instructing the bishops to prescribe a course of study for undergraduates in the ministry. The course when it appeared covered only two years and was rather scant. It was due chiefly to the wisdom of John Emory that it was later enlarged and extended to four years. James Axley, grim and resolute, got the floor once more with his resolution prohibiting traveling or local preachers from engaging in the distillation or sale of whisky and other liquors and had the satisfaction of seeing it passed. The journal shows, however, that there were some members of the Conference who still thought it too radical.

CHAPTER XIII.

Senior Bishop of the Church.

It is certain that Asbury had expected McKendree to be what Whatcoat was, a sort of assistant bishop. In that expectation he had been, in some measure, disappointed. McKendree knew that, strictly speaking, there is no difference of rank in the Methodist Episcopacy. When it became necessary he did not hesitate to act on his own judgment; but his manner was always courteous, and he at no time forgot the personal priority of Asbury. From now on he was himself to be an elder brother in close official relations with younger and less experienced colleagues and would find it necessary to exercise a form and measure of leadership somewhat different from that which he had before displayed. In taking this new attitude he was not guilty of presumption, but was simply meeting a providential responsibility.

Being essentially a man of system, one of McKendree's first steps with his new colleagues was to suggest the devising of a definite plan for the distribution of their work among themselves. He saw that it was neither necessary nor always advisable that all three of them should attend every Annual Conference, and Roberts and George agreed with him. On deliberation, therefore, they concluded to make the circuit of the Conferences alternately, changing their fields every year. In due course of time this would bring each one of them into every part of the Church and serve the

interests of connectionalism. It was also arranged that if by chance any two or more of the bishops should be present at the same Conference, then the one assigned to it should be its responsible President, and the others should act simply as counselors or advisers. The wise order thus early instituted continues to this day. It prevents any possible friction or clashing of jurisdiction and helps to maintain the actual unity of the episcopacy. Experience has proved, moreover, that it is not always best for a visiting bishop to be too free even in the matter of offering advice. Without a full knowledge of the whole situation he might do more harm than good by putting in his hand.

The plan having been adopted, it was further agreed to put it in actual operation after the session of the Ohio Conference in the coming September. Bishop McKendree then expressed the opinion that as Bishops Roberts and George were just entering upon their responsibilities it would be well for them to accompany him to the New York, New England, and Genesee Conferences, which were soon to meet, so that they might see the state of things, harmonize their views and methods of transacting business, and thus forestall the danger of conflicts of administration when they should be apart from one another. Bishop Roberts at once acceded to the proposition, but Bishop George had business that called him elsewhere, and, besides, he confessed that "he did not see why it was necessary for three men to go and do one man's work." Accordingly they went their way, and he, for the time, went his. The New York Conference convened in New York City June 1, and the New England at Bris-

tol, R. I., June 22. From the latter place Roberts returned to his home in Pennsylvania, his object being to take his wife (he was without children) to the West, where he expected to make his home. At the Genesee Conference, held at Paris, N. Y., July 23, Bishop George put in an appearance; and he and McKendree traveled thence together to the Ohio Conference, held at Louisville, Ky., September 3. The faithful Roberts, having set his own affairs in order without delay, fell in with them again at this point.

In making out their first schedule, which they now proceeded to do, a slight difficulty arose. The hardest assignments were the two new Conferences which the General Conference had ordered to be organized in Missouri and Mississippi. With characteristic courage and magnanimity McKndree offered to take either one of them and let his junior colleagues say between themselves which should take the other. George, for some reason or other, did not find it convenient to journey to the frontier; and so McKendree went to Missouri and Roberts to Mississippi, which arrangement made it necessary for them both to add many hundred miles to their travels. In the meantime George occupied himself, profitably, no doubt, in visiting and preaching among his old friends in Georgia.

The Missouri Conference at its organization included all of Illinois, Missouri, and Arkansas. The first session met at Shiloh Meetinghouse, in Illinois, where the city of Belleville now stands. It was most fit that Bishop McKendree should preside. He had visited the field often and knew it thoroughly. No other man could have been so welcome. The Conference was

divided into two districts, the Missouri and the Illinois, and twenty-one preachers received appointments. At the head of the former district was Jesse Walker, and of the latter, Samuel H. Thompson. The Missouri District included one circuit in Arkansas, the Hot Springs, with William Stevenson in charge. The total membership reported for the year was three thousand one hundred and seventy-three. Out of such feeble beginnings has grown the giant Methodism of three great States. McKendree's second Conference was the Tennessee, at Franklin, October 20. So he did not have much time to tarry with his brethren in the West. At the Tennessee Conference nothing unusual took place. After a brief visit among his kindred in that quarter, he passed on to the South Carolina Conference, which was to convene at Columbia December 26. In the meantime Roberts had accomplished his journey to Mississippi. At Columbia McKendree found George awaiting him. The session was pleasant and profitable. The Bishop's journal notes the following fact: "Bishop George continued with me the remaining Conferences of my work and then entered upon his own course. But instead of relaxing my labors I continued with him to the Conferences in his division of the work, although I had attended them last year with Bishop Roberts." This arrangement took him again up the coast to the far north and brought him to the New England Conference, at Concord, N. H., May 16, 1817, and thence to the New York Conference, at Middlebury, Vt., on June 17. "Between the two places," he says, "we traveled through a fall of snow, the weather being so cold that

some of our company from the South had their faces frostbitten."

At Middlebury the two bishops parted, and McKendree returned to Tennessee. Passing by the head of Lake Champlain, he turned aside a little way to see the British fleet which Commodore McDonough had captured September 11, 1814, and then moved right on through New York and Philadelphia to the eastern shore of Maryland, from which he crossed the bay to Baltimore. At that place a little Dearborn wagon, which he had bought in Philadelphia with a view of lessening the excessive fatigue of riding, met him. Resting for a few days and then using his new vehicle, he passed through Maryland and Pennsylvania, crossed the Alleghanies to Wheeling, Va., and so on through Ohio and Kentucky to his brother's home in Sumner County, Tenn. There he met his old traveling companion, James Norton, who once more joined him in the same capacity.

On October 17 they started to the Mississippi Conference, which was scheduled for Midway, Miss., November 7, 1817. Of all the Bishop's journeys, few were harder than this. As the roads were not adapted to his wagon, he sold it and procured a pack horse to carry food for himself and his companions through the Indian nations. At Franklin they were joined by William McMahon, of great fame in Western Methodism, and his wife, who were going on a visit to her father, Judge Seth Lewis, in Louisiana. Such company relieved the tedium of the way. In the face of heavy rains, high waters, and some apprehensions from

drunken Indians, they got through safely and had a very agreeable time at the Conference.

The session being ended, the next thing was to get to the South Carolina Conference, at Augusta, Ga., January 27, 1818. To effect that end it was necessary for them to cross the two territories of Mississippi and Alabama and the whole State of Georgia. Winter was at hand. The rain came in torrents; all the streams were full; many of them overflowed their banks and covered the low-lying lands for miles. But, with Thomas Griffin as guide, they did not falter at difficulties or dangers. In crossing a deep and rapid creek in Alabama, and again in crossing the Chattahoochee River, they were put in grave peril of their lives. More than once they slept in the open woods. Now and then, without being aware of it, they were close to roving bands of Creek Indians, who were still in a murderous mood. As they were going out of the nation they met General Gaines going in and got much information from him. It was with feelings of the deepest relief and gratitude that they reached at last the hospitable home of the Bishop's beloved friend Lucas, at Sparta, Ga. There they gladly remained for nine days.

The Bishop's journal reads: "Having some spare time before me, I determined to rest and recruit my health." But the people would not let him rest. "They prevailed on me to be contented to rest the horses while they took me to popular meetings on the two following Sabbaths." To fill in the remainder of his leisure he and Lewis Myers then visited Louisville, the old capital of the State, Savannah and Charleston,

not sparing himself of labor at any point, and got to Augusta the day before the Conference opened.

This Conference was included in the assignments of Bishop Roberts; but he did not reach it till the fifth day, his horse having broken down on the route. His presence was greatly needed, as there was some "delicate and eventful business" to manage. But McKendree took his place and, of course, handled everything with wisdom and discretion and to the great satisfaction of Bishop Roberts, whose spirit was beautiful and brotherly.

Roberts's next Conference was to be at Norfolk, Va., February 26, and he begged McKendree to accompany him thither also. "But," says the latter, "as this would add six hundred miles' traveling to my already excessive labors, I was not disposed to do so and therefore took leave of him and set out on my westward tour. But, reflecting on his situation—a stranger to the way and the people, his horse with a sore back, and having barely time to get to the Conference, after riding five miles—I determined to return and accompany him if he had not gone. I found him, and he was delighted. We started early the next morning for Norfolk. Our time on the trip was diligently improved, traveling from thirty to forty-five miles a day. Rain did not stop us. Saturday we had our linen washed; on the Sabbath I preached; and thus we pushed on and got to Norfolk the day before Conference was opened. The back of the Bishop's horse was well, and the preachers and people were glad to see us."

Unexpectedly, Bishop George was on hand. Without consulting his colleagues, he had appointed Dr.

Phœbus missionary to New Orleans and had brought him and his family that far on the way. But he had made no provision whatever for the Doctor's support, which would be at least one thousand dollars. Very characteristically he now asked McKendree to assume the whole responsibility. That was presuming a little too far. The man who had gone hundreds of miles out of his way to accommodate Bishop Roberts drew back and declined to take this new load, though he expressed a willingness to advance a hundred dollars at once and to raise five hundred more if his two colleagues would undertake to get the rest. The result was that Dr. Phœbus, who was in every way fitted for the mission, returned to New York.

"The Conference closed with encouraging prospects, and the preachers parted in love." McKendree turned his face toward Tennessee. As far as Lynchburg, two hundred miles away, he had the company of preachers. But from there to Kentucky, not less than three hundred miles farther, he traveled alone, leading his pack horse all the way. He reached his brother's home about April 1. Pausing only a few days, he "resumed his plan of visiting the Churches on the Western frontier." This side trip, a sort of work of supererogation, took him through Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri, where he visited a great many Churches, attended three camp meetings, and labored with all the activity of a young man. Returning, he crossed the Ohio River at Louisville and spent several months of incessant toil in Kentucky and Ohio, preaching at thirty or forty different places and getting to the Ohio Conference, at Steubenville, on August 7, 1818.

His own comment on the year's labors deserves to be inserted here:

From Middlebury, Vt., June 13, 1817, to this place I have traveled over a very large tract of country. My rides have been excessively hard. My ministerial services in Conferences, camp meetings, and quarterly meetings, added to visiting the Churches throughout the districts and circuits, have been abundant, and I am now feeling the effects in a manner heretofore unknown to me, and instead of relaxation my work is rather more vigorous. Here, according to our division, my course begins and terminates at the Mississippi Conference.

No wonder he was beginning to feel the effects of such toils. The real wonder is that he had not entirely succumbed to them. From that time till the day of his death he was never really a well man. On his way to the Mississippi Conference, a few weeks later, he was overcome by what he describes as "a sudden shock" (possibly apoplectic) and escaped falling from his horse only by easing himself out of the saddle. In the course of two weeks two other shocks followed. Nevertheless, he forced himself to go through with the Conference proceedings. Let him narrate the facts:

On the first day of the session, October 29, 1818, I presided, but was exceedingly debilitated, owing mainly to my attack and partly to the error I committed in having blood taken and using an emetic. The second day the little Conference of ten members met in my room. I was in the bed, but the President *pro tem.* sat near my bedside, and the business of the Conference was done properly. It was a camp meeting Conference, and on the Sabbath there was preaching on the camp ground. I was taken in a carriage to the camp ground and lay on a bed near the stand during preaching, having been assisted to the place and supported by two preachers while performing

the ordination. Monday morning the preachers met, received their appointments, and took an affectionate leave of each other—except John Lane, Thomas Griffin, and Benjamin Edge, who waited a few days to see the progress of my complaint.

A few days decided his situation. He could not move. Until the 1st of February he continued to be the guest of the Fords. He says:

Every mark of attention was shown me, insomuch that I was humbled under a sense of obligation to the whole family. Sister Ford was a mother indeed to me, and her daughters were nursing sisters. A colored lad voluntarily took to nursing me. He would lie by my bed at night and wake up at the slightest noise, and was in every way the most attentive boy I ever saw. Brother Edge had been sent to a circuit, but left it to attend me.

About the middle of February he ventured to move by easy stages to Colonel Richardson's, near Natchez, by whom, and especially by Dr. Winans and Judge McGehee, he was most comfortably entertained for several weeks. In March, not wisely perhaps, he ventured to accompany Dr. Winans on a visit to the infant Church in New Orleans, and then returned to his asylum in the country. Being advised by his physician that he ought to leave that region before the coming of summer, he accordingly, about April 15, started back to Tennessee. That princely layman, Edward McGehee, gave him a light Jersey wagon for the trip and stocked it with all sorts of provisions. John Lane and Benjamin Edge accompanied him. They were ten days in passing through the Indian country. Hotels along the way there were none, and "stands" were few and far between. Eight nights they slept in the

woods. Notwithstanding all this, McKendree's health steadily improved, and he reached his brother's home in safety.

After resting among his own folks for a few weeks, he went with William MacMahon and wife to the Harrodsburg Springs, in Kentucky, and derived benefit from drinking the waters. Assisted from place to place and pausing to visit old friends as he went, he got to Cincinnati in time for the Ohio Conference, August 17, 1819. Having greatly enjoyed the fellowship of the brethren, he slowly wended his way back once more to his brother's, in Tennessee, and there spent the most of the winter. That was more like home to him than any other place on earth.

This particular period of McKendree's life was not without its compensations. It brought him great searchings of heart. His own account of it is most interesting and, as throwing a light on his religious experience, deserves to be reproduced here:

During this affliction I was brought to examine my life in relation to eternity closer than I had done when in the enjoyment of health. The spiritual and temporal business of the Church has become so complicated, spread out over so vast a territory, and involves so many responsible and delicate official acts that I have been almost constantly mentally employed and frequently greatly perplexed and distressed in its management. In this examination, relative to the discharge of my duties toward my fellow creatures as a man, a Christian minister, and an officer of the Church, I stood approved by my own conscience; but in relation to my Redeemer and Saviour the result was different. My returns of gratitude and loving obedience bear no proportion to my obligations for redeeming, preserving, and supporting me through the vicissitudes of life from infancy to old age. The coldness of my love to him "who

first loved me" and has done so much for me overwhelmed and confused me; and to complete my unworthy character I had not only neglected to improve the grace given to the extent of my privilege and duty, but for want of that improvement had, while abounding in perplexing care and labor, declined from first love and zeal. I was confounded, humbled myself, implored mercy, and renewed my covenant to strive and devote myself unreservedly to the Lord.

During the latter part of February, 1820, in company with Andrew Monroe, who has left a wonderfully readable narrative of the journey, he made the trip across the Cumberland Mountains, through East Tennessee, and thence on to Alexandria, Va., where, quite unexpectedly to the body, he dropped in on the Baltimore Conference and got such a reception as must have warmed his heart for many a day.

So closed the twelfth year of his general superintendency. Though somewhat broken in health, he was at high tide in the esteem and affection of the whole Church. With the exception of Asbury, no other man had ever been so esteemed in the connection. Nor has any man ever succeeded him who held the Church more closely in the hollow of his hand.

CHAPTER XIV.

Defending the Constitution.

The ratio of representation having been reduced, the General Conference of 1820 was smaller than either of the two preceding ones, being composed of only eighty-nine delegates from eleven Annual Conferences. The three bishops were present. McKendree took the chair and, according to his custom, presented a written address. Roberts and George made oral addresses. The plan of having the bishops to write one address representing them all had not yet been adopted. From beginning to end the session was full of interest and often of excitement. Many important measures were debated and adopted. All in all, it was a memorable Conference.

After the failure of Cokesbury College, in 1795, the Church for a long time took no further steps in the matter of education. Recently, however, there had been sporadic indications of a fresh awakening on the subject, and the General Conference, following the signs of the times, recommended that district schools and colleges, under the care of the Annual Conferences, be established in every part of the Church and authorized the bishops to appoint traveling ministers as presidents, principals, and teachers for these institutions without reference to the time limit. During the next four years Augusta College, under the joint patronage of the Kentucky and Ohio Conferences, was founded, and many others of like grade followed.

Some of them were not well placed nor wisely managed and soon failed, but the most of them survive in vigorous life till this day. The contribution which they have made to the intellectual and religious growth of the country is almost beyond estimate.

Growing out of an effort to give systematic assistance to Rev. Mark Moore, who was struggling manfully to get a foothold for the Church in New Orleans, a General Missionary Society had been organized in New York in April, 1819, by Joshua Soule, Freeborn Garrettson, Nathan Bangs, Laban Clark, and others. Its achievements had not yet been great. For the first year it collected only $823.64. But it opened the eyes of the Church to a great need and was now taken over by the General Conference and made connectional in its scope.

For a long time there had been misunderstandings between the preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada and the missionaries sent out to that country by the British Wesleyan Missionary Society, and in 1816 the Society had addressed a long letter to the General Conference urging an amicable settlement. But the Conference, after hearing from the Canadian delegates, Black and Bennett, declared: "We cannot consistently with our duty to the societies of our charge in Canada give up any part of them, or any of our chapels in those provinces, to the superintendence of the British connection." That was taking an extreme position and an indefensible one.

As the troubles grew it was now determined to send a delegate to England for the purpose of securing a complete and brotherly adjustment, and John Emory,

young but wise, was chosen for the mission. Before he started the bishops gave him a letter of instructions, in which they said, among other things: "We are of opinion that the most effectual means to prevent collision in the future will be to establish a specific line by which our field of labors shall be bounded on the one side and the British missionaries on the other." Acting on this principle, Emory fully achieved the end for which he was sent. It was agreed that the British Methodists should have the exclusive occupancy of Lower Canada and the Americans of Upper Canada. This compact, honorable to all concerned, was fully and faithfully executed. O! if in 1844 and afterwards! The Committee on Episcopacy, noting the great weakness of Bishop McKendree, brought in an early report, recommending that he be released from all work except such as he himself might feel free to undertake, and also that ample provision should be made for any extra expenses connected with his illness and infirmity. The Bishop was profoundly moved by this display of generosity and carried the memory of it through all the coming years.

On May 9th the committee further reported that "it is expedient that one additional General Superintendent be elected and ordained at the General Conference." This report was promptly adopted, as the former one had been. On Saturday morning, May 13, after singing and prayer led by Freeborn Garrettson, the roll was called to see whether any delegates were absent. S. G. Roszell and D. Ostrander were appointed to collect and count the ballots, and the election proceeded. The count showed that Joshua Soule had

forty-eight votes and Nathan Bangs thirty-eight. Only three votes were scattering. Looked at in the light of subsequent events, it is clear that Soule had received the undivided support of the strict Constitutionalists, and Bangs that of those who leaned to a lax construction of the Restrictive Rules. The lines were closely drawn, as they continued to be till the end of the Conference. But if there was anything like logrolling or political manipulation, no trace of it is left in the record. In the midst of intense feeling men stood by their convictions—that was all. My reason for being so full at this point is that McKendree played a large, not to say a determining, part in the proceedings that now followed. If any other reason were necessary, it could be found in the intrinsic importance of what took place.

Dr. Horace M. Du Bose, the only worthy biographer of Soule, has given so admirable an account of that great and noble man that it would be superfluous to deal with him extensively in this volume. This much, however, may be properly said of him at any time: that he was, with the exception of McKendree, far and away the most commanding figure of his generation in American Methodism. And a little more of a biographical character must also be added in common justice. Descended from George Soule, who came over in the Mayflower, a New Englander of New Englanders both in his blood and in his training, a Calvinist by long inheritance, he became a convert to Methodism in his sixteenth year and an itinerant preacher in his eighteenth. Without more than the rudiments of an education to begin with, he became a

wide and diligent reader and gathered large stores of knowledge from many fields. Before he was twenty-five he had been appointed presiding elder of a district that covered the State of Maine. Even at that time he was a recognized leader of men. When he appeared in the General Conference of 1808 he was only twenty-eight; but, in spite of his youth, he was one of the committee designated to frame the Constitution of the Church, and, as a matter of fact, he became, more than any other man, the real author of that notable instrument. His services as Book Agent from 1816 to 1820 revealed him as a business man of great capacity. In the emergency which I shall presently describe he acted with consummate courage and candor. When again the tides were out and running high, in 1844, he stood like a breakwater. The singular steadiness and consistency of his whole career entitles him to be called Joshua the Majestic. He lived till 1867, having magnified his episcopal office for forty-three eventful years, and then passed away in serene and unshaken hope of a better life.

Before Soule could be ordained—that is to say, on Tuesday, May 16—Timothy Merritt and Beverly Waugh called up a resolution which they had previously introduced, providing for the election of the presiding elders by the Annual Conferences. The same old straw was to have another threshing, and a most vigorous one. A debate of great ability followed. It lasted for two whole days. Twenty-one speakers took part in it. Few converts, if any, were made by either side. After some parliamentary fencing by Ezekiel Cooper, it was finally moved by William Capers

and Nathan Bangs that a special committee of six, three from each side, should be appointed to confer with the bishops and see whether something could not be devised that would be satisfactory to all parties. The motion prevailed.

The committee was composed of Ezekiel Cooper, John Emory, Nathan Bangs, Samuel G. Roszell, Joshua Wells, and William Capers. They met the bishops, but accomplished nothing by the interview, for the bishops themselves were divided. McKendree stood squarely against the innovation as involving an infraction of the Constitution. Roberts seemed to agree with him, but was not quite ready to assert himself. George, who had in him elements both of weakness and of stubbornness, would say nothing, though he knew perfectly well what he was going to do. This interview took place on the late afternoon or evening of Tuesday, May 18th. The committee adjourned to meet again early on the morning of the 19th. Roszell Wells, Bangs, and Capers kept the engagement, but Emory and Cooper, for some reason or other, failed to appear, and as a result of their absence no action was then taken. When the Conference adjourned at noon, however, Bishop George requested the committee to meet him in the gallery of the church and revealed the fact that he was in favor of what he called certain "accommodating" resolutions. Roszell was in no very good humor and interrogated the bishop quite narrowly. But after a free talk the three Constitutionalists, Capers, Wells, and Roszell, consented in a moment of weakness and as a peace measure to report the

following resolutions, embodying substantially Bishop George's own views:

Resolved, That, whenever in any Annual Conference there shall be a vacancy or vacancies in the office of presiding elder, in consequence of his period of service of four years having expired, or the bishop wishing to remove any presiding elder, or by death, resignation, or otherwise, the bishop or president of the Conference, having ascertained the number wanted from any of these causes, shall nominate three times the number, out of which the Conference shall elect by ballot, without debate, the number wanted; provided that when there are more than one wanted not more than three at a time shall be nominated nor more than one at a time shall be elected; provided, also, that in case of any vacancy or vacancies in the office of presiding elder in the interval of any Annual Conference the bishops shall have authority to fill such vacancy or vacancies until the ensuing Annual Conference.

Resolved, That the presiding elders be, and they hereby are, made the advisory council of the bishop or bishops or president of the Conference in stationing the preachers.

EZEKIEL COOPER,
STEPHEN G. ROSZELL,
N. BANGS,
J. WELLS,
J. EMORY,
WILLIAM CAPERS.

On the afternoon of the same day, Thursday, the 19th, without much further discussion, the report was taken up by the Conference and adopted by sixty-one to twenty-five. Some of the opponents of change had got the notion that the resolutions as slightly amended had been divested of their unconstitutional features; and, being weary of a strife that had run through long years, they either voted for them or declined to oppose them. The "amiable irresolution" of Roberts and the

"judicial weakness" of George contributed to the result. A fuller examination of the resolutions, such as was afterwards made, would have shown at the time that they really contained every objectionable feature embodied in the original paper of Merritt and Waugh and conceded nothing of any worth to the defenders of the Constitution. It is never sound policy to make a real or apparent compromise on a question of principle.

But Soule was not deluded for a minute. He grasped the full significance of the action and acted with heroic promptness. In a letter written at once to Bishops George and Roberts—McKendree being a few days absent in the country on account of his health—he declared that the action of the General Conference was unconstitutional because it undertook by a mere majority vote to strip the episcopacy of a power bestowed upon it by organic law, and he added that under such circumstances he "could not consistently with his convictions of propriety and obligation enter upon the work of an itinerant General Superintendent." This language is so very explicit that it seems strange that anybody should ever have been reckless enough, even in years of passion and prejudice, to call in question the perfect sincerity of its author.

McKendree was also prompt to speak out. On Monday morning, May 22, Roberts and George showed him Soule's letter and expressed the opinion that it exhibited an indisposition to submit to the General Conference. McKendree thought not, and at his suggestion Soule a little later indorsed on the back of it this sentence: "At the special request of Bishop McKen-

dree I hereby certify that in the above statement I mean no more than that I cannot, consistently with my views of propriety and responsibility, administer that part of the government particularly embraced in the act of the General Conference above mentioned."

Soule was not to stand alone in this emergency, though he would have done so if it had been necessary. Fortunately for him, the powerful support of the senior bishop now came to his help. On Monday morning, May 22, McKendree was in his place on the platform. Roberts and George very courteously showed him the letter which they had received from Soule. He had already, through a written communication from Mr. Capers, been put into full possession of all that had gone on in the Conference during his few days of absence and had prepared a ringing protest against the so-called "peace measure." This protest, along with Soule's letter, he now presented to the Conference. In his journal he says that the protest contains "an intimation" of his opinions concerning "the constitutional difficulty." Intimation is scarcely the term with which to describe his remarks. A straighter or more downright document was never penned. Every word of it shows intense conviction. The importance of it justifies its reproduction in full:

BALTIMORE, May 22, 1820.

To the Bishops and General Conference, now in session.

On Saturday evening I received a copy of the resolution which passed on the 19th instant, which, contrary to the established order of our Church, authorizes the Annual Conference to elect the presiding elders and thereby transfers the executive authority from the General Superintendents to the Annual Conferences and leaves the bishops divested of their

power to oversee the business under the full responsibility of General Superintendents. I extremely regret that you have, by this measure, reduced me to the painful necessity of pronouncing the resolution *unconstitutional and therefore destitute of the proper authority of the Church.*

While I am firmly bound, by virtue of my office, to see that all the rules are properly enforced, I am equally bound to prevent the imposition of that which is not properly rule. Under the influence of this sentiment and considering the importance of the subject I enter this *protest.*

If the delegated Conference has a right in one case to impose rules contrary to the Constitution, which binds hundreds of preachers and thousands of members in Christian fellowship, and on which their own existence and the validity of their acts depend, why may not the same right exist in another? Why not in all cases? If the right of infringing the Constitution is admitted, what will secure the rights and privileges of preachers and people, together with the friends of the Church? If the Constitution cannot protect the executive authority, in vain may the moneyed institutions and individual rights call for help from that source.

Believing as I do that this resolution is unauthorized by the Constitution and therefore not to be regarded as a rule of the Methodist Episcopal Church, I consider myself under no obligation to enforce or to enjoin it on others to do so.

I present this as the expression of my attachment to the Constitution and government of the Church and of my sincere desire to preserve the rights and privileges of the whole body.

Your worn-down and afflicted friend, W. McKENDREE.

As Soule had been put into the hands of the bishops for ordination, they made ready, though without his knowledge, to proceed with the ceremony. This fact becoming known or suspected, it stirred up a good deal of feeling. At 3 P.M. Tuesday, May 23, a resolution was brought forward by D. Ostrander and James Smith, the object of which was to arrest any present

action on the part of the bishops—if not, indeed, to make it impossible that Soule should be ordained at all. The resolution was as follows:

> Whereas Brother Joshua Soule, bishop elect, has signified in his letter to the Episcopacy, which letter was read in the open Conference, that if he be ordained bishop he will not feel himself bound to be governed by a certain resolution of this General Conference relative to the nomination and election of presiding elders; therefore
>
> *Resolved,* That the bishops be earnestly requested by this Conference to defer or postpone the ordination of the said Brother Soule until he gives satisfactory explanations to this Conference.

This resolution led to considerable discussion. A motion was finally made to postpone it indefinitely; and when it became evident that this motion would prevail, the resolution was withdrawn. So the day closed. On Wednesday morning, May 25, at Soule's own request, Bishop George announced that the bishops had postponed the ordination to a future period; but on Thursday morning, without consulting Soule, he announced that it would take place at noon of that day. Soule at once arose and read a communication resigning the office to which he had been elected. At the afternoon session S. G. Roszell and S. K. Hodges moved "that Bishop Soule be and is hereby requested to withdraw his resignation and comply with the wishes of his brethren in submitting to ordination"; and this motion prevailed, forty-nine ayes, the nays not recorded. But Soule's mind was made up. He once more stated his purpose, and there the matter ended. The Conference, so Bishop McKendree says, took no further vote on the subject.

On Friday morning, May 27th, William Capers and Joshua Wells moved that "we immediately proceed to elect another General Superintendent." But Nathan Bangs and twenty-nine others, knowing that the General Conference would again elect Soule, had already filed a written protest with the bishops against any further elections, saying, what was probably true, that any man chosen under the existing circumstances would take up the office under grave disabilities. When the existence of this protest became known, the motion was withdrawn.

The Conference, on the 26th inst., did a thing which showed a significant reaction. By a majority vote it suspended for four years the operation of the resolutions concerning the election of the presiding elders and left matters just where they had been from the beginning—this very much to the satisfaction of McKendree and Soule. They were both opposed, on every ground, to an elective presiding eldership, for they saw that it would introduce an incessant element of turmoil and confusion into the Annual Conferences. They were likewise opposed to making the elders a legal council, with power to control the appointments; for they could not help realizing that this change would take authority from the hands of the only men whom the General Conference could hold directly responsible for their administration, and put it into the hands of men responsible only to the Annual Conference, and would thus inevitably break up the unity and connectionalism of the Church. The man who does not see all this is blind.

But neither McKendree nor Soule would have felt

warranted in refusing to submit to the resolutions simply because they were injudicious or unwise. Their attitude was that these resolutions were unconstitutional; and they were certainly correct in this contention, for it is as clear as daylight that the appointing power was, and was understood to be, by the ordaining General Conference of 1808, an essential feature of that itinerant general superintendency which is protected by the third Restrictive Rule. The Church can take away this power if it should think best, but it can do so only by first altering the Restrictive Rule. Any attempt to do it by a short cut is lawless. If, moreover, the Constitution may be invaded at one point, there is no reason why it should not be disregarded at every point. The only possible protection of the rights and interests of the Church is in a rigid adherence to its terms and provisions. It was because these two great men had a full understanding of the value of things fundamental and organic that they maintained so strong a front against what was really revolutionary in character. To charge them with having been animated by any vulgar desire for personal advantage is to show an utter incapacity for reading their minds.

McKendree believed that the Annual Conferences, or the body of elders comprised in them, were the only final judges of the constitutionality of any legislation. On mature reflection, therefore, he proceeded during the next four years to lay before these Conferences the question of the constitutionality of the "Suspended Resolutions," and seven of them out of twelve declared them to be violative of the third Restrictive Rule. As showing, however, a spirit of conciliation, they agreed,

at McKendree's instance, to vote an amendment to the rule in question, and thus legally open the way for the proposed legislation. If the other five Conferences had taken the same course, they would have thus secured their object. But they were unwilling to admit the existing incapacity of the General Conference to do what they wished to be done and refused to take any action whatever, thus in the end, and perhaps providentially, defeating their own purpose.

It need scarcely be said that these four years were not an easy time to McKendree. His position had aroused a good deal of feeling against him. If he was not assailed so viciously as Soule, it was because his standing in the Church protected him against it. Even as it was, he did not escape criticism. The leaders who had been defeated largely through his agency, good men as they doubtless were, were smarting under the fact and getting ready to renew the struggle. He would have been something more or less than human if he had not suffered severely in passing through such an ordeal. An entry in his journal uncovers his heart:

> Until that time I had, so far as I know, the confidence and affection of the preachers generally, but after that I had to feel the effects of an astonishing change. Old friends met me with cool indifference or with retiring, forbidding reserve and sometimes even with rudeness. My best-intended movements were misconstrued, sometimes converted into faults or magnified to my disadvantage and to the injury of the cause which we were mutually bound to support. In the furnace of affliction I discovered my own imperfections as well as those of my brethren—saw wherein I might have acted more wisely and prudently in many cases—and that some of our afflictions might have been prevented and the same end ob-

tained by a course a little different and therefore better because less liable to misrepresentations.

That is noble. Only a Christian man of the highest type could have written it.

Notwithstanding his release by the General Conference from the burden of active work, McKendree continued for the first three years of the quadrennium to travel through the Church and as far as he possibly could to assist his colleagues in holding the Conferences. No one reading his journal casually would infer that he was a confirmed invalid. His sense of duty was such that he could not sit down and hold his hands as long as he was able to perform any labor. Another quotation from his journal is a better disclosure of his character than any comment from the pen of a biographer could possibly be:

I pursued my course as well as I could until the fall preceding the General Conference of 1824, when, observing the methods adopted by some and thinking that I could not attend Annual Conferences without interfering with their measures, or at least seeming to interfere with the election of delegates to the ensuing General Conference, which I deemed derogatory to my station, therefore, notwithstanding the fate of our controversy depended on the representatives to be chosen at the three following Conferences, I committed the cause to God and went no farther than to the Tennessee Conference.

Here again the intrinsic greatness of his character is disclosed. Much concerned as he was about the outcome of the matters that were agitating the mind of the Church, he would not seem to resort to anything that even looked like personal scheming or intrigue to carry his points.

McKendree went up from Nashville to the General

Conference of 1824 in company with young Robert Paine, who had been chosen a delegate as early as the law allowed by the Tennessee Conference. The account of the journey as published in Volume II. of the "Life of McKendree" is so uncommonly well written and so full of noteworthy incidents that there is a strong temptation to make copious quotations from it, but space forbids. Sufficient to say that they started on March 10 and reached Baltimore on April 28. The Bishop was desperately weak, but able to take the chair and open the session.

Contrary to a very general expectation, the General Conference turned out to be by a small majority in sympathy with the position of McKendree and Soule. The Baltimore Conference had contributed to this result by dropping John Emory, who favored the Suspended Resolutions, from its delegation and putting Soule, who was now by transfer a member of that body, in his place. The following preamble and resolution, which were adopted after consideration by a vote of sixty-three to sixty-one, tell the story:

> Whereas a majority of the Annual Conferences have judged the resolutions making presiding elders elective and which were passed and then suspended at the last General Conference unconstitutional; therefore
>
> *Resolved,* That the said resolutions are not of authority and shall not be carried into effect.

But the Conference was so evenly divided that, to avoid giving needless offense, it was agreed that the resolutions should again be carried over till 1828 as unfinished business.

The Committee on Episcopacy having reported that

it was expedient to elect two new bishops, the report was adopted by the Conference, though some dissented; and on May 26 Joshua Soule and Elijah Hedding, two of the strongest men in the Church, were chosen. Rarely ever has the voting been closer. On the first ballot there were 128 votes, of which Joshua Soule had 64, William Beauchamp 62, Elijah Hedding 61, and John Emory 59. On the second ballot Soule had 65, a bare majority, Hedding 64, Beauchamp 62, and Emory 58. Before the next ballot Emory withdrew his name, and Hedding had 66 and Beauchamp 60.

Of Soule a sufficient sketch has already been given in a preceding chapter. Hedding was a native of Dutchess County, N. Y., born June 7, 1780, and was converted December 27, 1798. Being soon afterwards licensed, first to exhort and then to preach, he was used as a supply on three separate circuits. In 1801 he was received on probation into the New York Conference. For eight years he traveled immense circuits in Northern New York and New England. It is doubtful whether any Methodist preacher ever had a harder novitiate. But he stood the test nobly. Then for four years he was a presiding elder, in which office he exhibited a balanced sagacity of judgment and an evangelistic zeal that but few of his contemporaries equaled. After that, till his elevation to the episcopacy, he spent the most of his time in Boston, Nantucket, Lynn, Portland, and New London. Four times he was chosen a delegate to the General Conference. His promotion was the result of solid and enduring qualities of character. Electing him bishop was

making no experiment. He was equal to the office from the beginning. The writer of these lines has often heard the late Bishop H. N. McTyeire, himself a very great bishop, speak in terms of the highest admiration of Hedding's services to the Church. The policy that kept him confined for the greater part of his episcopacy to the extreme eastern and northern part of the country was not judicious. If he had ranged more widely, it would have been better for him and for the Connection.

William Beauchamp, who came so nearly being chosen, is scarcely known to the Church of the present day even by name. Yet he was unquestionably one of the ablest ministers of his time. Born in Kent County, Del., April 21, 1772, and converted about 1787 in Wood County, Va., whither his father had removed some years before, he began to preach in 1791. Two years later he entered the itinerancy, traveling first as a supply under the presiding elder. Having served large circuits for about six years, he was then stationed in New York, Boston, Provincetown, and Nantucket. In 1801 he located and removed to Virginia and thence in 1815 to Chillicothe, Ohio, where he became editor of the *Western Christian Monitor* and also preached with great acceptability in all the region round about. From that place in 1817 he went still farther West, to Mt. Carmel, Ill., and engaged in helping to found a new community. In 1822 he was readmitted into the St. Louis Conference, and was in 1823 elected to the next General Conference. His death occurred October 7, 1824, in Paoli, Ind. Besides his other work, he published a valuable volume entitled "Essays on the Truth

of Christianity." He was called the "Demosthenes of the West" and would have undoubtedly been advanced to the episcopacy but for the fact that so many of his years were spent in the local ministry. Of John Emory something will be said later on.

Upper Canada, which had theretofore been divided between the New England and the Genesee Conferences, was now by its own request set up as a separate Conference. It is just as well to say here as later that five delegates were in their seats from that Conference at Pittsburg four years later, representing 9,678 members and very valuable Church property. It had become entirely evident to them in the meantime that their progress was much hindered by the fact of their connection with a Church lying chiefly within a foreign country, and they made a solemn appeal for a peaceable and brotherly separation. In response to that appeal they were authorized to form themselves into a separate Church, and provision was made for transferring to them their proportional interest in the Book Concern and Chartered Fund. The bishops were further instructed to ordain as bishop for them any one whom they should elect and present. In the fall of 1828 Bishop Hedding held their Conference, assisted them in completing their organization, and gave them his final blessing.

The fine-spun theory put forward to justify this division without justifying later divisions, that the missionaries who went to Canada went as volunteers and therefore had a right to quit at any time, being under a terminable contract or compact with the Methodist Episcopal Church, was not at all necessary.

That such men as John Emory and even Robert Paine should have laid the groundwork for it is most surprising. The outstanding fact is that the General Conference which withdrew its jurisdiction from Lower Canada in 1816 withdrew it in the same manner from Upper Canada in 1820.

The violent agitation of any single important question in Church or State is sure to involve, sooner or later, the agitation of all related questions. Out of the hot discussion concerning an elective presiding eldership there arose by a natural process the consideration of the status of local preachers and of lay members. All these matters were handled with great vigor in a paper called *Mutual Rights,* which was established at Baltimore for the purpose of giving expression to the most radical views. "In its pages inflammatory articles were published and severe attacks were made upon the economy of the Church. The English system was represented as superior to the American, and it was claimed that the excitement was sweeping over the Church." This claim had some foundation in fact. From 1824 to 1828 the agitation was kept up at fever heat. Nicholas Snethen, who had once been the defender of the Church and of Asbury against James O'Kelley, now became the file leader of the radicals. Thomas E. Bond, Sr., M.D., a local preacher of great influence and a writer of tremendous force, took up the cudgels against him.

What were called "Union Societies" were also organized in many places, and included all those who desired to maintain and propagate the so-called reform. It was perfectly natural that Baltimore City, which

had heard so much of the tyranny of the bishops and their creatures, the appointed presiding elders, should become the center and stronghold of the dissatisfied elements. In 1827 a convention of representatives from different sections of the country, all of whom were in antagonism to episcopacy and to many other features of the Church polity, met there to take counsel with one another. This convention was in no amiable mood. Before it adjourned it had laid down the platform of principles which virtually meant revolution. There then followed a flood of petitions, memorials, and appeals to the next General Conference, which convened at Pittsburg in May, 1828, demanding that the Discipline should be subjected to a thoroughgoing revision on all the points in dispute and threatening secession if the demands were not granted. But a reaction had set in in many quarters, and it was reasonably certain that not only the most extreme demands would not be granted, but that even moderate concessions would now be withheld. Nothing can be more stubborn than an aroused conservatism.

Bishop McTyeire sums up the whole case most admirably as follows:

> The temper on both sides in the greatly widened controversy was unfavorable to concession. The reformers were aggressive and hopeful for several reasons. They believed their cause just; it was favored by the political tendency of the country; an envious element of sectarianism which once existed in other denominations was ever ready to humble Methodism and was forward and loud to encourage disaffection; but chiefly they miscalculated as to the final adhesion of men who had, at one time or other, expressed views in sympathy with their own. Even Bascom uttered

some sentiments in the heyday of his blood which were not in harmony with his maturer life as one of the strongest, steadiest, and most trusted leaders of Episcopal Methodism the Church has ever had. Hedding leaned that way once on the original question, also Bangs and Waugh. Emory criticized and antagonized Bishop McKendree and Joshua Soule for the prompt, resolute means they used to save the constitution. Bishop George, in judicial weakness, and Bishop Roberts, by amiable irresolution, in the primary movement let the ship drive. But now, when the radical tendencies of these things were seen, the conservatives closed ranks and stood firm. The report of the General Conference of 1828, made by John Emory, was kind, strong, and conclusive and put an end to the hopes of the reformers, who proceeded to the organization of the Methodist Protestant Church. Some who originally favored modifications, so soon as the proposed measures, which lay at the bottom, had been declared unconstitutional, declined further agitation. Methodism had been demonstrated a most efficient plan for spreading the gospel. Practically, it had never oppressed them. If any were oppressed, it was the class who did not complain but were complained against—the itinerant preachers. Thoughtful men must not be counted on to join in a theoretical and destructive reform because every pin and screen in the tabernacle that has sheltered them is not exactly to their notion. Unfortunately, a reform which began in principles drifted largely into personalities. "The most ungracious assault," says a writer well informed in the literature of that day, "was that which was made upon Bishop George. Such, generally, is the lot of those who, while favoring partial charges, adhere to the vital principles of an organization. They must either go with the reformers to the point of destruction or be regarded as traitors to their interests."

The extreme reformers had gone too far to draw back. On November 2, 1830, they met once more in Baltimore, formed a discipline and constitution, and

organized the Methodist Protestant Church, which has had an honorable history.

Its ministry and press have never been without strong men, and its membership has been generous. Its polity is marked by an extreme jealousy of power which is lodged nowhere, but distributed; and there are guards, balances, and checks. A brake on the wheels of a railroad train is a good thing to keep it from going too fast, but a railroad train constructed on the principle of a brake will not go at all. This honor justly belongs to the Methodist Protestant Church. Its one good, peculiar principle—lay delegation—has in late years been incorporated into the chief Methodist bodies of Europe and America.

At the General Conference of 1824 Dr. Richard Reece and the Rev. John Hannah appeared as the first formal fraternal delegates from the British Wesleyan Conference and were most gladly welcomed. The bishops were instructed to nominate some minister to return the visit, but failed to do so because they could not agree on a man. McKendree and Soule nominated William Capers; Hedding and George insisted on Wilbur Fisk. Roberts refused to cast the deciding vote. Capers was at that time the older and better known of the two men. His character was without a flaw. His gifts on the platform, in the pulpit, and in the social circle were equal to those of any man in the Church. His crowning glory lay in the fact that he had led the way in the establishment and maintenance of missions among the Indians and the negroes. Yet the bare fact that by inheritance and necessity he was a slave holder was held by Hedding and George to be a sufficient bar to his appointment. The General Conference of 1828 took a different view

of the case and by a vote of seventy-two to sixty-two designated him for the place. The manner in which he discharged the duties of the mission was wholly creditable to himself and perfectly satisfactory to the British Conference. Fisk, of course, was worthy of any honor, and the fact that he received sixty-two votes on this occasion showed how high he already stood in the minds of his brethren.

CHAPTER XV.

Nearing Port.

It is not worth while to follow McKendree farther into the minute details of his life. All his great public activities are ended. Nothing more that we could learn about him would essentially alter our estimate of his character. But it is, nevertheless, pleasant to mark the close of his career in a general way and to see with what a high and resolute spirit he kept right on to the end.

Leaving Pittsburgh on a steamboat immediately after the close of the General Conference of 1828, he went down the Ohio River to Maysville, Ky., and from that place, preaching and praying along his route, he turned south to Tennessee, getting to his brother's home in the early autumn. Everybody, except the few who were very intimate with him, expected him now to cease his labors. He had richly earned the right to rest. The Church exacted nothing further from him and, indeed, preferred that he should enter into his retreat and make himself easy for the remainder of his pilgrim days. But he was not looking for rest this side the river. In the course of the fall he attended several camp meetings near Nashville and astonished everybody by the vigor of his utterance. Bishop Paine says:

> At Douglass Camp Meeting there was an immense concourse, and the Bishop preached for me at eleven o'clock to at least six thousand people; and although his voice seemed

feeble, yet it was so distinct and penetrating, and so perfectly silent was the vast crowd, that after the first five minutes he could be heard by all.

Before the winter had fairly set in he was off for Georgia, had a perilous ride across Lookout Mountain, and preached several times before the Grand Council of the Cherokee Indians, in whose welfare he had always been profoundly concerned and among whom he had "always been kindly received and treated." Farther along the road he passed through Athens, Greensboro, and Lexington, stopping long enough for a sermon or sermons at each place. When he got to Eatonton he was desperately sick. The doctors, according to the horrible practice of the times, took a pint of blood from him and two hours later another pint. The next morning, though feeling quite unable to stand up in the pulpit, he preached an hour. At Milledgeville he met and ordained Stephen Olin, then and for several years afterwards a professor in Franklin College, an institution of the State. By the first of the year he was at Savannah to meet the Georgia Conference, and, finding that Bishop Roberts, who had been designated to preside, had not arrived, he undertook to supply the vacancy; but on the opening day, for the first time in his history, he became confused in the chair and occupied it no more.

From Savannah he moved on to Charleston, Raleigh, Richmond, Norfolk, Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York, finally going back home by the Ohio and Kentucky route. This long sweep took him to six Annual Conferences, at every one of which his presence was a recognized benediction.

The early winter of 1829-30 he spent in and about Nashville, much of it in the homes of his long-time friends, Joseph T. Elliston and H. R. W. Hill. But about January 20, taking young A. L. P. Green, afterwards famous as Dr. Green, for a traveling companion, he made an episcopal visitation to the far South, traveling for the most part on the steamboat Nashville. At Natchez he greatly enjoyed the fellowship of Dr. Henry Tooley, William Winans, Benjamin M. Drake, and others. The greater part of the time was spent in New Orleans, where the Church needed his influence and counsel. But he also visited Bayou Sara and Woodville, in which latter place he was the honored guest of Edward McGeehee. This was no pleasure jaunt, but a tour of close inspection and of active service. When he could he preached, and when he could not preach he made pastoral visits more vigorously than many a young itinerant on his first circuit. He did not get back to Nashville till April. In the late summer of 1830, much against the counsel of friends, he ventured on one more circuit of the Conferences and went as far east as to the Holston at Ebenezer, Greene County, Tenn., but was compelled to turn back from that point, more dead than alive, and to recross the Cumberland Mountains in midwinter. At last, convinced that he must no longer strain himself, he consented to be nursed during the rest of the winter.

When the spring of 1831 was fairly open, being recuperated by his temporary retirement, he went forth through Kentucky and Ohio, passing the mountains in the fall and staying most of the winter in the home of Dr. Henry Wilkins, in Baltimore. In the latter part

of March, 1832, he journeyed from Baltimore to Philadelphia to be received with open arms by the loving household of Dr. Thomas Sargent. For the first time the General Conference, on May 1 of that year, gathered in the Quaker City. Two hundred and twenty-three delegates from twenty-three Annual Conferences were present. All the bishops signed the Episcopal Address. McKendree was greatly pleased with it, for it revealed the fact that the Church, for so many years rent and torn by unbrotherly strifes, was again at peace and growing with unexampled rapidity. Bishop George had died on August 23, 1828, and McKendree was invited to preach a funeral sermon and to preside at the ordination of the bishops elect, which he did in an appropriate and impressive manner on May 25.

The two new bishops were James O. Andrew and John Emory, the former receiving 140 and the latter 135 votes out of a total of 223. Andrew was born in Georgia, the son of John Andrew, who was the first native Georgian to enter the itinerant ministry. The family came originally from New England, and the Bishop showed in many ways the Puritan strain in his blood. Born in 1794 and converted while a mere youth, he was admitted into the South Carolina Conference in 1812, having come up from young Lovick Pierce's district. His education was exceedingly limited. "He had never seen the world nor been a day's journey from home." But he had two good qualities to his credit, strong common sense and intense piety. Starting on the Saltkahachie Circuit, he soon showed the metal that was in him. His growth

was steady. After a few years he was sent in succession to Charleston, Wilmington, Columbia, and Augusta. By instinct and choice he was a pastor. In his prime he was a preacher of surpassing eloquence. On the platform, especially when advocating the cause of missions, he was without a peer. His social gifts were of the highest order. A simple-minded, warm-hearted, thoroughly consecrated minister of the gospel, it was nothing less than a tragedy that he should later have become a storm center in the Church and should have been traduced and slandered beyond measure. The eulogy pronounced upon him in 1844 by Stephen Olin is more than an offset to all the ill things ever said against him. He survived till 1871 and died as he had lived, a stainless and holy man.

John Emory was born in Queen Anne County, Md., in 1789, of wealthy and influential parents. He received a classical education and was admitted to the bar. But in his twenty-first year he turned his back upon the honors of the world and joined the Baltimore Conference, much to his father's chagrin. Bishop McTyeire calls him "a polished shaft." Almost from the beginning he was eminent and influential in the Church. As city pastor, Book Agent, Secretary of the General Conference, and delegate to the British Conference he had displayed ability and tact. As early as 1824, though he was then but thirty-five years of age, he lacked only four votes of being made a bishop. As a progressive conservative he did not hesitate to favor change as long as the foundations were undisturbed. McKendree's greeting to him after his election was: "Bishop Emory, John Emory, come to my arms." In

1835 they both died, one in the fullness of his years and the other in the splendid meridian of his manhood. How inscrutable are the ways of Providence! It was believed by all who knew Emory that if he had lived twenty years he would have left his impress upon every feature of Methodism. His end was tragic. Thrown from a carriage as he was driving into Baltimore, he was found unconscious on the roadside and never recovered the power of thought or speech. The whole Church put on the robes of mourning for him.

Unable to attend the sessions of the General Conference regularly, McKendree came and went at his will. Everybody treated him with the profoundest deference. The time of criticism was over. His last visit to the Conference was made the day before adjournment. Everybody knew that he would never face his brethren in such an assemblage again. Dr. Larrabee describes the scene very graphically:

> Leaning on his staff, his once tall and manly form now bent with infirmity, his eyes suffused with tears, faltering with emotion, he exclaimed: "Let all things be done without strife or vainglory, and try to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. My brethren and children, love one another." Then, spreading forth his trembling hands and raising his eyes to heaven, he pronounced in faltering and affectionate accents the apostolic benediction. Slowly and sadly he left the house to return no more. Everybody rose and stood till he had departed.

The return trip from Philadelphia to Tennessee almost completely exhausted Bishop McKendree's scanty reserve of physical force; but rest and kind attentions revived him to such an extent that he was able to move

about carefully later in the season, to attend the Tennessee Conference, which met in Pulaski on November 7, 1833, and, in the absence of Bishop Roberts, to preside and make the appointments with the help of Robert Paine and Lewis Garrett, whom he personally designated as his helpers. Twice in December following he preached in the new McKendree Church, at Nashville, and on the last night of the year conducted a watch-night service at the same place. Having renewed his journal, he made the following entry:

It was a solemn time. I felt my spiritual strength renewed. I returned with Brother Hill and his family, and at four o'clock I arose refreshed.

Mirabile dictu, the next day at ten o'clock he took passage on the palatial steamer Tennessee for one more—the very last—visit to his friends in Mississippi and Louisiana. His careful habit of keeping his accounts he still maintained. Arrived at Natchez, he says: "For my passage I paid $20; to waiters on the boat, $1.75; to porter, 50 cents; for riding in dirty hack, $2." He preached twice on the boat, twice at Natchez, and as often as possible at other places. Besides his old friends Tooley and Winans and Drake and McGeehee, he fell in with such young men as Charles K. Marshall and Francis A. Owen. To reach McGeehee's he traveled thirty-five awful miles in a carriage. While there he thought he had a slight stroke of paralysis. Could it have been senile epilepsy? Little human things appear in his journal:

January 28.—Excellent coffee every morning at six o'clock greatly relieves one of headache.

Blessings on the memory of the good housewife who furnished it to him! Nowhere in the world do they make it better than in that low country. But trifles like these apart, the wonder remains that at no time of his life did the Bishop show a deeper or more rational concern for the spread of religion and the stability and growth of the Church. He was still very much alive in the spirit. It was about May 1 when he got back to Nashville.

For the rest of the year the chronicle runs thin and narrow. A delightful incident took place in the autumn at the Old Salem Camp Ground, in Sumner County. William Burke, his fellow soldier of other times, was present, having come down from Ohio. For three successive days the veterans preached time about. In the intervals they spoke of the old memories and dwelt much on departed friends. It was a feast of love to them both. The Tennessee Conference met November 5 in Lebanon. Thither McKendree went up. His first Conference had been held at Liberty Hill, in Williamson County, and now he was back, in the providence of God, near where he had begun. The circuit was complete.

Words are too poor to describe the welcome which he received from his brethren. They looked on him as one whose conversation was in heaven and whose stay upon the earth must needs be brief. Many an alabaster box was broken and the contents poured over his head. If he had needed material things, they would have been given him. But as he had no lack of these, veneration and love were showered on him. Scarcely hoping that he would be able to do it, the

Conference asked him by formal vote to write a history of his life, and he promised to do the best he could. But it was too late. Among all his papers, which were later turned over to Thomas L. Douglass and Joshua Soule, not a line of biography could be found.

The Conference closed on the 14th, and on the 15th the Bishop reached Nashville, but was too unwell to attend church on the next day. During the week, however, and at the urgent solicitation of many persons who longed to hear him once more, he consented to occupy the pulpit of McKendree Church on November 23. A great audience was present and lingered on the words of his lips. That was his last sermon.

For about a month he lingered at Nashville, sweetening and sanctifying all the homes into which he entered. As the holidays drew nigh, he became anxious to be at the home of his brother, thirty miles away. The presentiment of approaching death was on him, and he wished to spend his last days among his very own. A hanging nail on one of his fingers had been torn out and became infected and painful. Yet he finished the journey by Christmas day. Very soon thereafter he took to bed and left it no more till the end came. Loved as he was by the whole household, he was specially idolized by his sister Nancy, who, like himself, had never married and who now devoted herself to his comfort with unwearied fidelity, sitting by his side day and night and tenderly noticing his smallest want. At one time a cloud seemed to come over his mind, but that soon passed away. On March 1 he said to his nephew, Dudley Mc-

Kendree, who leaned over him to receive his communication: "I wish that matter to be perfectly understood that all is well with me whether I live or die. For two months I have not had a cloud to darken my sky. I have had uninterrupted confidence in my Saviour's love." Many gracious words fell from his lips. To one of his friends he said: "Follow me as I have followed Christ, *only closer.*" On the 5th the struggle ended. With a final smile he entered into rest. He was buried by the side of his father in the adjacent graveyard. Forty years afterwards his remains were taken up and, with those of Joshua Soule, reinterred in the campus of Vanderbilt University, thus hallowing the ground, as the resolutions passed by the Board of Trust said, for all time.

What more is there to be said? If the foregoing pages have not left the impression that William McKendree was a great man, a great Christian, a great bishop, then nothing would suffice to do so. The writer of this little volume closes his task by praying that out of his reserves of power God may call and qualify other men as the generations go by to carry on the good succession of such ministers.

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